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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 1999). The prevalence of mental health problems has increased in the general population, and the incidence of mental health problems has increased in the prison population.

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

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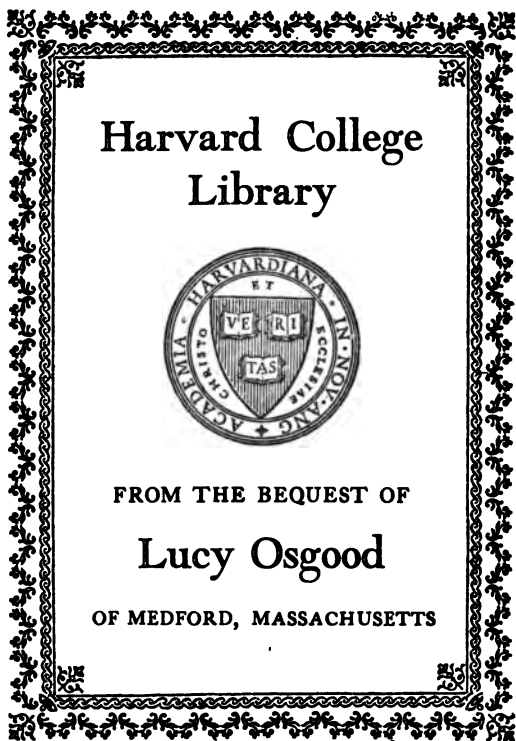
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**HISTORY OF  
AMERICAN LITERATURE**



*Courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Memorial Association, Baltimore*

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The new statue of Edgar Allan Poe, by Sir Moses Ezekiel of Richmond, Virginia. It was presented to the city of Baltimore by the Edgar Allan Poe Memorial Association.

# HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

*By*

LEONIDAS WARREN PAYNE, JR.

*Associate Professor of English in The University of Texas*

*Author of "Southern Literary Readings," and*

*"Selections from American  
Literature"*

RAND McNALLY & COMPANY

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*Lucy Edgood Freund*

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## THE CONTENTS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>The Preface</i> . . . . .   | vii  |
| I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD, 1607-1765  |      |
| General Characteristics . . . . .  | 1    |
| Literature in the Southern Colonies . . . . .  | 3    |
| Literature in the New England Colonies . . . . .   | 12   |
| The New England Annalists and Historians . . . . .                                       | 14   |
| The New England Poets . . . . .  | 18   |
| The New England Theologians . . . . .  | 22   |
| Literature in the Middle Colonies . . . . .  | 30   |
| General Reference Books for American Literature . . . . .                                | 40   |
| Special Reference Books for Colonial Literature . . . . .                                | 41   |
| II. THE REVOLUTIONARY AND FORMATIVE PERIOD,<br>1765-1800                                 |      |
| Preliminary Statement . . . . .  | 44   |
| Historical Background . . . . .  | 45   |
| The Orators . . . . .  | 48   |
| Political Writers . . . . .  | 51   |
| The Poetry . . . . .   | 66   |
| Drama and Fiction . . . . .  | 79   |
| Special Reference Books for Revolutionary Literature . . . . .                           | 85   |
| III. ARTISTIC OR CREATIVE PERIOD, 1800-1900  |      |
| Preliminary Statement . . . . .  | 88   |
| 1. The New York and Middle Atlantic States Group . . . . .                               | 89   |
| The Major Writers . . . . .  | 89   |
| The Minor New York and Middle Atlantic States Poets . . . . .                            | 127  |
| The New York and Middle Atlantic States Essayists and<br>General Prose Writers . . . . . | 140  |
| The New York Novelists and Story Writers . . . . .                                       | 145  |
| 2. The New England Group . . . . .   | 149  |
| Preliminary Survey . . . . .   | 149  |
| The Rise of Unitarianism . . . . .   | 149  |
| The Transcendental Movement . . . . .  | 151  |
| The Rise of the Doctrine of Abolition . . . . .  | 155  |

|  | <b>PAGE</b> |
|--|-------------|
| The Major New England Writers . . . . .  | 156         |
| The New England Historians and Essayists . . . . .   | 224         |
| The Minor Poets of New England . . . . .   | 229         |
| The New Poetry in New England . . . . .  | 234         |
| The New England Writers of Fiction . . . . .   | 239         |
| 3. The Southern Group . . . . .  | 246         |
| Preliminary Survey . . . . .   | 246         |
| Southern Orators . . . . .   | 251         |
| The Major Southern Poets . . . . .   | 253         |
| Minor Southern Poets . . . . .   | 282         |
| Southern Writers of Fiction . . . . .  | 290         |
| 4. The Central and Far Western Group . . . . .   | 312         |
| Preliminary Survey . . . . .   | 312         |
| The Major Western Writers . . . . .  | 320         |
| Other Western Poets . . . . .  | 348         |
| The New Poetry in the West . . . . .   | 354         |
| Minor Western Writers of Fiction . . . . .   | 362         |
| Final Words . . . . .  | 372         |
| Special Reference Books for Nineteenth Century American Literature . . . . .               | 375         |
| Chronological Chart of Chief 19th Century American Writers . . . . .                       | 378         |
| Suggestions for Outside Reading and Special Study Courses in American Literature . . . . . | 382         |
| Colonial Period . . . . .  | 386         |
| Revolutionary Period . . . . .   | 390         |
| Artistic or Creative Period . . . . .  | 393         |
| Suggested Subjects for Essays . . . . .  | 401         |
| <i>Index</i> . . . . .   | 407         |

## THE PREFACE

It is now an accepted doctrine among teachers of English that the study of the history of literature should take a comparatively small part of the high-school student's time and that the first-hand study of the literature itself should receive his largest effort. But it is also generally recognized that in order to approach intelligently the actual literature of any period or country and to gain a clear grasp of its progress as a whole, the young student will need at least a brief handbook to set before him in organized form the essential facts of the literary history of that period or country. American literature, particularly in the two earlier periods, is but an interpretation of the political, social, and industrial life of the growing nation. In a brief survey of these early periods it will only be necessary to refresh the high-school student's memory regarding the historical backgrounds and to list for him the chief writers of the peculiar kinds of literature produced during these periods, giving an occasional quotation from the more important literary monuments in order to satisfy the student's antiquarian interest and intellectual curiosity as to the sorts of material which our ancestors produced in these periods. In the later period, beginning about 1800 and extending down to the present, the student will need a somewhat fuller treatment of the artistic or permanent literature, mainly because the aim of the teacher here will be to lead the student to read more deeply in this literature, both because of its nearness to him and because of its greater artistic importance.

The plan of this *History of American Literature*, then, is to treat briefly the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, giving the essential facts of the literary history, together with a few illustrative quotations from such of the authors as may be of most interest to young students; and to treat in more detail the important literary movements and figures of the nineteenth century, bringing the record down through practically the first two decades of the twentieth century. In this later literature the student will find much that will appeal directly to his interests, and here, too, the teacher will

naturally find the bulk of the literary material to be placed before the high-school students for closer study and analysis. Hence it will be well to organize into more definitive groups and schools the important writers of this later period, and to give a fuller treatment of both the major and the minor authors whose works undoubtedly go to make up the great body of our artistic and creative literature.

No course in American literature can be satisfactorily based on the history alone. As has already been said, the selections themselves should be placed in the hands of the student if he is to gain any permanent knowledge of the development of our national literature. In order to meet the widespread demand for a single volume containing the choicest American classics edited in such a form as to make them easily comprehensible to young students, I have prepared a companion volume to this *History of American Literature*, under the title of *Selections from American Literature*. The two volumes, together with such additional outside reading as may be assigned, will make a fairly complete elementary course in American literature.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to three of my colleagues in the English department of the University of Texas—namely, Professors Killis Campbell and Robert Adger Law and Dr. Earl L. Bradsher, each of whom has saved me from numerous pitfalls by reading the material in manuscript or in proof sheets. I am also deeply indebted to Professor Percy H. Boynton, of the University of Chicago, who read the manuscript in its initial form and made many valuable suggestions for its improvement. My thanks are also due to Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, and Amy Lowell for permission to use complete short poems from their copyrighted books; to the Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to use the poem "Life" from the works of Edward Rowland Sill; to Edwin Markham for permission to reprint entire his latest revision of "The Man with the Hoe"; and to Julian Richard Hovey for permission to quote two stanzas from "The Call of the Bugles" by Richard Hovey.

L. W. PAYNE, JR.

Austin, Texas,  
January, 1919

# HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

## I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD, 1607-1765

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Historical Background.** The colonial period of our literature extends from the first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, to the calling of the Stamp Act Congress in 1765. It is the period of beginnings, the seedtime, as it were, for the later growth into flower and fruitage during the period of our independent national life. The first business of the colonists was to establish themselves on the new continent—to clear the forests and build homes, open up farms and pasture lands, construct roads and establish means of transportation and communication, overcome the hostile Indian tribes, and organize all the forces for a new religious, social, and economic life. This constructive and formative work naturally consumed the interests and energies of the colonists so largely that little time was left for the development of literature. Moreover, there was no unity of government or of purpose in the earlier part of the colonial period. Different European nations had established colonies on the new continent, and a struggle for supremacy inevitably followed. The history of the colonial period gives us the details of this struggle for supremacy, a struggle which, after narrowing down to a fierce conflict between France and England, was finally settled in England's favor by the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

**Tendencies toward union.** Naturally during the latter part of this struggle the English colonies were drawn into a

closer union for defense against their common enemy, the French and their Indian allies; and this tendency toward union and self-defense very soon began to express itself in opposition to the restrictive and oppressive policies of government imposed upon the colonies by the mother country, England. The second large task of the American colonists, then, was that of consolidation and united action for the purposes of obtaining absolute independence from foreign domination. In 1765, two years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris, the Stamp Act was passed by the English Parliament, and within a few months a colonial congress, called the Stamp Act Congress, met in Philadelphia to protest against this unjust method of taxation. This significant event may be said to mark the beginning of formal opposition to English sovereignty over the American colonies, and may be considered as marking the close of the colonial period.

**Nature of colonial literature.** The literature of the colonial period is, as we might expect, given over largely to purely descriptive, historical, and theological writing. The new country, the strange kinds of life revealed here, and the incidents attendant upon the hardships and dangers of pioneer settlement furnished the first material for record. Geographical and descriptive narratives and theological discussions, then, make up the great body of the written record of the period. Practically no purely artistic literature was produced. The little poetry that was composed was for the most part crude and bungling and based on artificial foreign models. No purely imaginative literature was written during these strenuous times, and hence the written records which have come down to us, important as they are from an historical or antiquarian standpoint, have little or no artistic value or purely literary appeal for modern readers.

**Method of treatment.** In a brief survey of the principal literary products of the colonial period, we may conveniently

consider them under three groups—namely, those in the Southern Colonies, in the New England Colonies, and in the Middle Colonies. We must constantly bear in mind the significant fact that during this period there was not one central government in any of the geographical divisions, but many and diverse governments in each of them. Hence we need not look for a national or American spirit in our literature until the colonies shall have become united in the struggle against foreign domination. The early literature was quite as largely English as American, but we may call it American because it deals with American scene and history, and because it was written by English settlers on American soil, and partially, particularly in the last half of the Colonial period, by writers who were born and educated in America.

#### LITERATURE IN THE SOUTHERN COLONIES

**Captain John Smith: "A True Relation."** To the Southern Colonies belongs the primary place in date, though not in importance, in our early literature. The first writer of note whose work may be called American in color and subject-matter was Captain John Smith (1579-1631), a native of Lincolnshire, England. Moved by the typical Elizabethan spirit of adventure and daring, he ran away from home when he was fifteen years old and became a soldier of fortune. After passing through numerous perilous and romantic adventures in Europe, Asia, and Africa during the first ten years of his travels, he returned to England in time to join the Virginia Expedition in 1607. The next year he sent back to England a long letter, which was published under the title, *A True Relātion of Some Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned Since the First Planting of the Colony*. This pamphlet is now usually regarded as the first book in American literature. It contains an

account of the first year in the life of the Virginia Colony, with much information about the new country, its inhabitants, its geography, and the hardships and dangers suffered by the colonists, particularly in their contact with the savage Indians. Naturally, Captain Smith is the hero of many of the incidents recorded. The account is written in a vivacious, picturesque, and forceful style, and the book is on the whole, perhaps, the most trustworthy of all the writings of this remarkable man.

*Smith's other works.* Among Captain Smith's numerous later publications may be mentioned *A Map of Virginia* (1612), *A Description of New England* (1616), *New England's Trials* (1620-1622), and *The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624). It is interesting to note that Smith wrote his *Description of New England* before the first permanent settlement had been established in that part of America. The title of "Admiral of New England" was conferred upon him by the English government, and he proudly bore this designation during the remainder of his life, even though it amounted to nothing more than an empty honor. Only one of Smith's later works needs to be discussed in more detail.

"*The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles.*" This is an enlarged and more highly colored account than *A True Relation*, and was written long after Captain Smith had returned to England. In this later volume the account of Captain Smith's rescue by the intercession of the Indian princess Pocahontas is given. The romantic nature of this incident, no mention of which is made in Smith's earlier work, *A True Relation*, nor in any other early narrative, has caused some critics to question the authenticity of the Pocahontas story and even the historical value of all Captain Smith's writings. In fact, *The General Historie* is so unreliable that nothing in it can be accepted unless supported by other evidence. We should not hesitate,





CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

From the margin of his map of New England in "A Description of New England," London, 1616, which now hangs in the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston.

however, to give John Smith credit for the exceedingly interesting and informing nature of his material and for the vivid and dramatic style in which he has presented it. While he cannot in any sense be classed as a great writer, he unquestionably will be remembered as the first Englishman who successfully made literary capital of American scene and life.

*The Pocahontas story.* The following passage taken from *The General Historie* will illustrate Smith's style and also give the central portion of the Pocahontas story:

At last they brought him to *Meronocomoco*, where was *Powhatan*, their Emperor. Here more than two hundred of those grim Courtiers stood wondering at him, as he had beene a monster; till *Powhatan* and his trayne had put themselves in their greatest braveries. Before a fire vpon a seat like a bedsted, he sat covered with a great robe, made of *Rarowcun* skinnnes, and all the tayles hanging by. On either hand did sit a young wench of 16 or 18 yeares, and along on each side the house, two rowes of men, and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red: many of their heads bedecked with the white downe of Birds; but every one with something: and a great chayne of white beads about their necks.

At his entrance before the King, all the people gaue a great shout. The Queene of *Appamatuck* was appointed to bring him water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, in stead of a Towell to dry them: having feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before *Powhatan*: then as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, *Pocahontas* the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could preuaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne vpon his to saue him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should liue to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper; for they thought him as well of all occupations as themselves. For the King himselfe will make his owne robes, shooes, bowes, arrowes, pots; plant, hunt, or doe any thing so well as the rest.

**William Strachey.** Another early work remarkable for its vivid and powerful prose description is a *True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight*,



RUINS OF CHURCH TOWER, JAMESTOWN

upon and from the Islands of the Bermudas (1610). The expedition under Sir Thomas Gates arrived at Jamestown in 1610 after a stormy voyage and a shipwreck on the Bermuda Islands. William Strachey, who seems to have been secretary of the expedition, wrote this remarkably realistic account of the sea storm and the wreck, and it is not at all to be wondered at that Shakespeare made use of some of the picturesque and dramatic phrases of this narrative when he came to describe the storm at sea in *The Tempest*, written about 1611.

**George Sandys.** The first ambitious effort in poetical composition and scholarly attainment in America must be accredited to George Sandys (1577-1644), who, in the face of almost insuperable obstacles in the newly settled continent, made a rimed translation of fifteen books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and published it in London in 1626. It is a noteworthy fact that this translation was made in the heroic couplet, the vehicle afterward widely used by Dryden, Pope, and their followers, in the translations and satirical poems of the classical age in English literature. Both Dryden and Pope read Sandys' translation and commented favorably upon the American colonist's work. Professor Moses Coit Tyler in his *History of American Literature, Colonial Period (1607-1765)*, speaks of Sandys' translation as "the first monument of English poetry, of classical scholarship, and of deliberate literary art reared on these shores."

**"Epitaph on Nathaniel Bacon."** The single noteworthy original poem that has come down to us from the Southern Colonies is the "Epitaph on Nathaniel Bacon," composed by some unknown person. This dirge was discovered in the *Burwell Papers*, so called from the name of the distinguished Virginia family who secured the papers and first gave them to the public. The manuscripts dealing with the so-called Bacon's Rebellion (1676) were revealed about a century after

the stirring events which they chronicle. The "Epitaph" is said to have been written by Bacon's body servant. This might well have been true, for in those days many white persons of excellent education were indentured to service to the richer colonists. Professor Tyler speaks enthusiastically of this noble dirge, saying that it has stateliness, energy, and a mournful eloquence, reminding one of the commemorative verse of Ben Jonson.<sup>1</sup>

**Southern chroniclers.** In the latter part of the colonial period several worthy chroniclers arose in the Southern Colonies, notably Robert Beverly, author of *The History and Present State of Virginia* (1705); William Stith, president of William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, and author of the *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (1747); and Colonel William Byrd (1674-1744), a highly cultured and wealthy Virginia planter, author of the *History of the Dividing Line Run in 1728*.

**William Byrd.** "Colonel" William Byrd<sup>2</sup> (1674-1744) deserves special attention as an example of the Cavalier type in the Southern Colonies, for he is thoroughly typical of the high-class Virginia gentleman of colonial times. He was well educated both by travel and study, and he collected around him all the evidences of comfort and culture that wealth and social standing could at that time attract to American shores. His library was perhaps the largest in America during colonial times. The extensive correspondence and methodical journals of Byrd, though not published in his own day, give evidence of the influence of the select literature with which his wide reading made him familiar. Like his Cavalier ancestors, Byrd cultivated literature as an elegant pastime rather than for the fame

<sup>1</sup>Moses Coit Tyler, *History of American Literature, Colonial Period (1607-1765)*, page 18. The "Epitaph" has been frequently reprinted in collections of American verse.

<sup>2</sup>His father, William Byrd, Senior, was a real colonel in the early militia, and the second William Byrd has always been called Colonel Byrd, by courtesy it is supposed.

which publication would have brought him. His literary remains lay in manuscript until 1841, and it was not until



WESTOVER, THE HOME OF WILLIAM BYRD

the beginning of the twentieth century that his productions were given to the public in carefully edited form. Since his work was first published, William Byrd's reputation as an entertaining writer and an excellent prose stylist has grown to such proportions that he is now placed in the first rank of colonial prose writers. *The Westover MSS, or The History of the Dividing Line Run in 1728*, is a record of his experiences with a surveying party as a member of the commission appointed to settle the disputed boundary line between North Carolina and Virginia. Naturally Byrd was more or less a partisan for Virginia, and his descriptions of the dismal North Carolina swamps and especially his witty and satiric portraits of the uncultured North Carolinians still provoke lively mirth in all readers who dip into his narrative. The book is full of vivid descriptions of the strange plant

and animal life and natural phenomena of the new country, and many amusing incidents are interspersed to relieve the tedium of the narrative of the progress of the surveying party. The following bear story will illustrate Byrd's style.

One of the Young Fellows we had sent to bring up the tired Horses entertained us in the Evening with a remarkable adventure he had met with that day. He had straggled, it seems, from his Company in a mist, and made a cub of a year old betake itself to a Tree. While he was new-priming his piece, with intent to fetch it down, the Old Gentlewoman appeared, and perceiving her Heir apparent in Distress, advanc'd open-mouth'd to his relief. The man was so intent upon his Game, that she had approacht very near him before he perceived her. But finding his Danger, he faced about upon the Enemy, which immediately rear'd upon her posteriors, & put herself in Battle Array. The Man, admiring at the Bear's assurance, endeavour'd to fire upon Her, but by the Dampness of the Priming, his Gun did not go off. He cockt it a second time, and had the same misfortune. After missing Fire twice, he had the folly to punch the Beast with the muzzle of his Piece; but mother Bruin, being upon her Guard, seized the Weapon with her Paws, and by main strength wrenched it out of the Fellow's Hands. The Man being thus fairly disarm'd, thought himself no longer a Match for the Enemy, and therefore retreated as fast as his Legs could carry him. The brute naturally grew bolder upon the flight of her Adversary, and pursued him with all her heavy speed. For some time it was doubtful whether fear made one run faster, or Fury the other. But after an even course of about 50 yards the Man had the Mishap to Stumble over a Stump, and fell down his full Length. He now wou'd have sold his Life a Penny-worth; but the Bear, apprehending there might be some Trick in the Fall, instantly halted, and lookt with much attention on her Prostrate Foe. In the mean while, the Man had with great presence of Mind resolved to make the Bear believe he was dead, by lying Breathless on the Ground, in Hopes that the Beast would be too generous to kill him over again. To carry on the Farce he acted the Corpse for some time without daring to raise his head, to see how near the Monster was to him. But in about two Minutes to his unspeakable Comfort, he was rais'd from the Dead by the Barking of a Dog, belonging to one of his companions, who came Seasonably to his Rescue, and drove the Bear from pursuing the Man to take care of her Cub, which she fear'd might now fall into a second Distress.

## LITERATURE IN THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

**Character of the Puritans.** Both the Plymouth (1620) and the Massachusetts Bay (1630) Colonies were settled by the Puritans, those of the Plymouth Colony being called the Pilgrim Fathers. The Puritans were so called because they demanded a purer form of religion than was afforded by the established church of England. They insisted that the will of God, as revealed through the Scriptures and the consciences of men, should be the supreme authority in all religious matters. Hence they were opposed to all prescribed church forms and religious ceremonies. They held to the Calvinistic system of theology, proclaiming that man was created with full freedom of will, and that after the fall of Adam, God had provided a means through the substitution of Christ, whereby the chosen ones might be saved from the penalties of sin and received up into heaven. The whole purpose of man's life on earth was, first, to make his salvation sure; and second, to subdue the body in order to prepare the soul for the joys of heaven. All the frivolities and pleasures of life ought to be suppressed, they believed, and all men ought to engage in religious activities, such as reading the Scriptures, attending divine worship, and praising God and praying continually, and so strive in every way to bring the human will into harmony with the will of God. This austere and serious attitude toward life dominated the temper of the early Puritan settlers in Massachusetts, and in it we shall find the key to the interpretation of early literature in the New England colonies.

**Their self-dependency.** The Puritans took life seriously. They kept fuller and more trustworthy records of their history than did the Cavaliers in Virginia. Forced out of England because of their non-conformity in religious matters, they were practically cut off from the mother country and made almost wholly self-dependent. They developed their own system of education, founding Harvard College as early



as 1636 and establishing a system of public education at a similarly early date. They read few English books, and presently they were supplying themselves with their own newspapers, almanacs, and home-made text-books, such as the famous *New England Primer*. In 1639 the first printing press in this country was set up at Cambridge, and on it the *Bay Psalm Book* was printed in 1640. Their historians kept painstaking and extensive records, their preachers wrote many long sermons and theological works, their leaders enacted many restrictive personal laws, and on the whole the New England settlers soon developed a more or less complete and independent system of social and religious life.

**Homogeneity of their literature.** Moreover, the Puritans were more alike in their ideals and more unified and determined in their purposes than were the Southern colonists. They planned a sort of ideal government with God as the invisible ruler, desiring to perfect and try out their plan far away from England on the free shores of the wild, new continent. They wished to attract recruits from England, however, and so they were constantly advertising among the dissenters in England the advantages of their form of worship and their absolute freedom from English domination on the distant American shores. But in reality there was little true religious freedom offered, for the Puritans wanted everybody in their colony to submit to their religious ideas, as is clearly shown by their severe treatment of the Quakers, Roger Williams, and the Episcopalians. The dominant ideals of the New England Colonies, then, were based on their Calvinistic theology. Their histories are largely the record of their religious activities; the main body of their literature is made up of sermons and theological works; and what little poetry they produced was also written in their characteristic tone of Calvinistic theology, as is shown in "The Day of Doom" by Michael Wigglesworth, as an example of the worst, or in "Contemplations"

by Anne Bradstreet, as an example of the best poetry of this period in the New England Colonies.

**Quality of their literature.** The quality of this kind of literature is not very high if judged on purely esthetic grounds. There is no real poetry, no drama, no purely imaginative literature; and except for its historical, theological, and antiquarian interest, and its revelation of the religious, political, and social life of our Puritan ancestors, the literature of the whole colonial period presents little that need detain the young student. Comparatively, however, the works produced in New England are more important than those produced in the other colonies. For our present purposes we may speak of the New England authors in three groups, the chief annalists and historians, the most notable verse makers, and the great preachers and theologians.

#### NEW ENGLAND ANNALISTS AND HISTORIANS

**William Bradford.** Among the New England annalists the first name is that of Governor William Bradford (1588-1657). He came over with the Plymouth colony in 1620, and for a number of years kept a careful journal of the early activities of the settlers. He was assisted in this work by Edward Winslow, another prominent member of the colony, and in 1622 there appeared in London a part of their journal, which became known as *Mourt's Relation*, so called because the prefatory note was signed by "G. Mourt." Bradford's great work, *The History of Plymouth Plantation*, was begun in 1630 and continued through twenty years. It lay in manuscript for over two hundred years, during which time it had quite a romantic series of travels, landing finally in the library of the Bishop of London and remaining there many years before it was printed in the *Annals of the Massachusetts Historical Society* about the middle of the nineteenth century. The manuscript was given to the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1896, and it is now carefully guarded as one of the chief historical treasures in the possession of the State Library at Boston.

**John Winthrop.** Governor John Winthrop (1588-1649), of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, also kept a careful journal, beginning his record with the sailing of his vessel from England in 1630 and continuing it to the end of his life. This journal also lay in manuscript until near the end of the eighteenth century, when it was published under the title of *The Journal of John Winthrop* (1790). Early in the nineteenth century (1825) it was republished with some additional Winthrop manuscripts under the title of *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*. There is some excellent prose in this so-called history, notably the elaborate and sound definition of true liberty; but the work as a whole is, like Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*, far more interesting as a source book of historical facts than as a product of literary value. As a sample of the expository prose style of the colonial period we may quote a paragraph from what Winthrop called his "Little Speech on Liberty," found in his *Journal* for the year 1645.

For the other point concerning liberty, I observe a great mistake in the country about that. There is a twofold liberty, natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists: it is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority. The exercise and maintaining of this liberty makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts: *omnes sumus licentia deteriores*. This is that great enemy of truth and peace, that wild beast, which all the ordinances of God are bent against, to restrain and subdue it. The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal: it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions, amongst men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty

to that only which is good, just, and honest. This liberty you are to stand for with the hazard (not only of your goods, but) of your lives, if need be. Whatsoever crosseth this is not authority, but a distemper thereof. This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority; it is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. . . . If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke; but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good. Wherein, if we fail at any time, we hope we shall be willing (by God's assistance) to hearken to good advice from any of you, or in any other way of God; so shall your liberties be preserved, in upholding the honor and power of authority amongst you.<sup>1</sup>

**Thomas Morton.** In contrast to the uniform seriousness of these Puritan annalists, the work of the sportive, romantic, and somewhat whimsical Cavalier and Episcopalian, Thomas Morton (?-1646), should be briefly treated. He was the leading spirit in a small group of traders who attempted to found a colony of adherents to the Church of England at Mount Wollaston (now Quincy, just south of Boston), better known in history and literature as Merry Mount. These Cavaliers retained their English customs, among others the Mayday celebration in which they set up a Maypole and engaged in the joyous amatory pranks characteristic of this English festival. The Puritans would not tolerate this band of light-hearted merrymakers, and Governor Bradford sent Captain Miles Standish to disperse them. Hawthorne has based one of his stories, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," on this incident. Morton was forcibly transported to England by the Puritans. He responded to this treatment by stirring up in England considerable opposition to the Massachusetts colony. He published a book called *The New English Canaan* (1637),

<sup>1</sup>Reproduced from *Old South Leaflets*, No. 66.

in which he praises in extravagant terms the advantages of New England, urges members of the English Church to become settlers, and attacks with humorous satire the religious and social customs of the Puritans. For example, he speaks of the Puritans as "winking," that is closing their eyes, when they pray, "because they think themselves so perfect in the high way to heaven, that they can find it blindfold."

**Judge Sewall's diary.** Among the later colonial annalists, Judge Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) should receive special mention. He was brought to America when he was about nine years old, and hence he may be said to have been reared and educated in the Massachusetts Bay colony. He was a man of exemplary character, being esteemed as a typical Puritan gentleman of his time. He accumulated considerable wealth, became first a minister and then a judge, and finally rose to be the chief justice of the colony. He took part as one of the seven judges in the arraignment and condemnation of the Salem witches, but he afterward publicly acknowledged his error in so doing and prayed God to forgive him for this grievous sin. He kept a fairly complete diary from 1673 to 1729, and it is upon this that his fame chiefly rests. His minute records of the political, religious, and social life of his times make a veritable mine for the students of the history of this period. The quaint reference to the punishment of his children for playing at prayer time and eating during the "Return Thanks," and especially his naïve account of his courtship of several estimable ladies, make entertaining reading even in the present day. The value of a personal diary must be estimated on the frankness and fullness of the picture of life presented rather than upon formal literary excellences; as a diary Judge Sewall's account ranks among the best of its kind. Another work written and printed by Judge Sewall in Boston, a pamphlet entitled *The Selling of Joseph*, a

*Memorial* (1700), attacks the custom of buying and selling slaves in the Massachusetts colony. This tract is now remembered as the first anti-slavery document produced in America.

#### THE NEW ENGLAND POETS

**The "Bay Psalm Book."** There was little or no poetry worthy of the name in the New England colonies. The



From the painting by G. H. Boughton  
PURITANS GOING TO CHURCH

Puritan mind was averse to works of pure imagination in any form, and verse was only tolerated as a handmaiden of religious instruction and admonition. A few stiff eulogies in the form of memorial verses have survived in New England, but they are hardly worth reading. The *Bay Psalm Book* is a typical example of the crude and almost barbarous literary taste of the early divines. A number of the leading ministers, among them Richard Mather, Thomas Welde, and John Eliot, were appointed to translate the Psalms for use in the song service of the churches. The volume was issued from the Cambridge printing press in 1640, and thus has the distinction of being the first important book published within the present limits of the United States. The following selection from the awkward and ineuphonious

translation will suffice to illustrate what the New England settlers accepted as poetry:

23 A PSALME OF DAVID

- The Lord to mee a shepheard is,  
want therefore shall not I.
- 2 Hee in the folds of tender-grasse,  
doth cause mee downe to lie:  
To waters calme me gently leads
- 3 Restore my soule doth hee:  
he doth in paths of righteousnes:  
for his names sake leade mee.
- 4 Yea though in valley of deaths shade  
I walk, none ill I'le feare:  
because thou art with mee, thy rod,  
and staffe my comfort are.
- 5 For mee a table thou hast spread,  
in presence of my foes:  
thou dost annoynt my head with oyle,  
my cup it over-flowes.
- 6 Goodnes & mercy surely shall  
all my dayes follow mee:  
and in the Lords house I shall dwell  
so long as dayes shall bee.

Let it be remembered, however, that this sing-song verse rendering of the finely modulated prose of the Bible was written to be sung rather than read.

**Anne Bradstreet.** But there is one New England writer who possessed a genuine poetical talent, a woman, Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672), known as the "tenth Muse." She was born in England, but came to America with her father, Thomas Dudley, who afterwards became Governor of Massachusetts, and her husband, Simon Bradstreet, who also became governor of the colony. She was a woman of fine qualities, making her personality felt in the life of the colony as well as in her own household of eight children. With all of her other duties, and in spite of ill health brought on because of the exposure and hardships incident to colonial

life, she found time to compose a considerable volume of poems. Her manuscripts were carried to England, and in 1650 they were published under the title, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America: Or Several Poems, Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning*. We are pleased to know that the lady is not herself responsible for this aspiring and self-laudatory title, but that her London publisher thus elaborated it to meet the demands of his trade. There are included in this volume five long poems in heroic couplets on the four elements, the four humors in man, the four ages of man, the four seasons, the four monarchies;<sup>1</sup> and several shorter poems, among them "Contemplations," which is considered her best production. The eighth and ninth stanzas from this last-named poem will show, in spite of certain strained conceits, that Anne Bradstreet took real delight in nature, that she was genuinely sincere in her moral sentiments, and that she had a fairly good ear for rhythm.

Silent alone, where none or saw, or heard,  
In pathless paths I lead my wandering feet;  
My humble Eyes to lofty Skyes I rear'd  
To sing some Song, my masèd Muse thought meet.  
My great Creator I would magnifie,  
That nature had, thus deckèd liberally  
But Ah, and Ah, again, my imbecility!

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,  
The black clad Cricket bear a second part,  
They kept one tune, and plaid on the same string,  
Seeming to glory in their little Art.  
Shall Creatures abject, thus their voices raise?  
And in their kind resound their makers praise:  
Whilst I as mute, can warble forth no higher lays.

**Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom."** The most characteristic Puritan poem, and the most popular one of its time if

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<sup>1</sup>Some one has called these five poems "The Quintet of Quarternions."



we may judge from its numerous editions, was "The Day of Doom, or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment" by Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705). Judged by the standards of his own times, Wigglesworth was a great poet, but the modern world has practically reversed this decision. In colonial homes "The Day of Doom" was circulated perhaps more widely than any other poetical composition. Children were required to memorize long passages from it in order to ground themselves in the Calvinistic doctrines elaborately rimed into the two hundred and twenty-four stanzas of this so-called poem. To the modern mind theological doctrines are not, in the first place, suitable material to be put into a poem; and in the second place, a double ballad stanza with jingling internal rime is not a fit vehicle in which to express dignified thought or religious emotion. A brief sample of this sort of theological argument in ballad meter will probably satisfy most modern readers.<sup>1</sup> The "Plea of the Infants" is the title of the section which deals with the problem of the damnation of those who die in the innocence of infancy. The children make a plea to the Lord for mercy, arguing that since they were immediately carried "from the womb unto the tomb" they had no chance either to sin or repent; they urge that Adam's sin should not be visited on them, since they had neither the power nor the opportunity to resist or prevent his action. God replies in a long argument and concludes his answer to the children's plea as follows:

"You sinners are, and such a share  
as sinners, may expect;  
Such you shall have, for I do save  
none but mine own Elect.

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Percy H. Boynton thinks that Wigglesworth consciously wrote his poem in this jingling measure to attract popular attention, and argues that this poet was capable of a higher strain, as is proved by certain lines written in heroic couplets and printed at the end of "The Day of Doom." See *American Poetry*, p. 600.

Yet to compare your sin with their  
 who liv'd a longer time,  
 I do confess yours is much less,  
 though every sin's a crime.  
 "A crime it is, therefore in bliss  
 you may not hope to dwell;  
 But unto you I shall allow  
 the easiest room in Hell."  
 The glorious King thus answering,  
 they cease, and plead no longer;  
 Their Consciences must needs confess  
 his Reasons are the stronger.

#### THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGIANS

**Theological writings.** While the historical records and the poetical productions may be more frequently consulted by modern readers, there is no doubt that it is the theological literature—the sermons, philosophical and religious tracts, and ecclesiastical histories—that most characteristically represents our Puritan forefathers. As literature, most of these productions are now worthless; but as representative products of the Puritan mind and temper, they are invaluable. A long list of influential divines with their extensive religious publications might be compiled, but we can get a fairly adequate conception of the theological writing of the time by considering the work of the most prominent of them.

**Nathaniel Ward's "The Simple Cobler of Agawamm."** Before taking up the theological works proper, however, we may consider briefly one peculiar prose composition called *The Simple Cobler of Agawamm* (1647). Nathaniel Ward, the author of this curious book, was an Englishman who came to America under the persecutions of Laud and became a Puritan minister at Agawam (later called Ipswich) in what is now Essex County, Massachusetts. *The Simple Cobler* was published in London after Ward's return to England and was really addressed to English rather than American readers. It is a prose satire, sprinkled here and

there with heroic couplets, attacking religious toleration, fashions in dress, and the general political conditions of the times. There is no great literary merit in the work, but it struck an original note and attracted considerable attention in its day, passing through four editions within the first year of its publication. Because of his satiric vein, his peculiar verbal coinages, and his original phraseology, Ward has been called an early American Carlyle, but he is perhaps quite as much an early English Carlyle, although he hardly deserves to be mentioned in the same breath with the great nineteenth-century English writer.

**The Mather family: Richard Mather.** The Mather family furnished by far the most distinguished and influential group of ministers in New England. A famous old epitaph written for the tomb of the first representative of the family who came to America, reads:

Under this stone lies Richard Mather  
Who had a son greater than his father,  
And eke a grandson greater than either.

This Richard Mather, a non-Conformist minister in England, was forbidden to preach and practically forced to emigrate to America. He settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1635, and at once took rank with the influential ministers of the colony. It is said that out of his loins sprang more than fourscore preachers.

**Increase Mather.** All four of Richard Mather's sons became ministers, and of these, the youngest, Increase Mather (1639-1723), became the most prominent man of his time. He was graduated from Harvard College and became a preacher at once, but decided to go abroad for further study at Dublin before beginning his active ministry. Upon his return he married the daughter of John Cotton, another famous Puritan divine, and thus united in his distinguished offspring, Cotton Mather, two famous New England families

of preachers. He became minister of the old North Church in Boston, and in addition to his ministerial duties, which were later shared by his son Cotton, he was called to the presidency of Harvard College. In this double position of preacher and college president, he exerted an enormous influence. He was not only the most distinguished minister and educator of his time, but the most powerful force in the political life of the colony. He was sent to England to renew the provisions of the royal charter under King William III, and his success in obtaining favorable modifications in the interest of the colony is said to mark him as a skilful statesman. The only work of his that is now usually referred to by literary historians is his *Essay for Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684), a work eminently characteristic of our Puritan ancestors in their credulity respecting supernatural occurrences.

**Cotton Mather.** If Increase Mather is reckoned as a voluminous writer with his hundred and fifty publications, what shall we say of Cotton Mather (1663-1728) with his nearly four hundred books, tracts, and sermons? The younger Mather was exceedingly precocious in his religious and literary development. He confesses that he began to engage in prayer from the time that he learned to speak, and he spent the greater part of his life poring over his books and his own compositions—most of which were of a religious character. He was graduated from Harvard College when he was seventeen, and even then was looked upon as a master in the whole realm of knowledge. He had an enormous capacity for languages, being able to put his compositions into five or six different foreign tongues. His literary output seems almost superhuman. On an average, he put forth something like a dozen publications a year, besides keeping innumerable fasts, spending many hours in private prayer, attending public services of all kinds, preaching hundreds of sermons, and faithfully attending to the numerous other

pastoral duties of his charge. One of his books, *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft*, was unfortunately quoted as an authority during the later cruel persecutions at Salem. He is not to be so greatly blamed for his connection with witchcraft, however, as his detractors have maintained, for he was but inquiring in a painstaking manner into a commonly accepted mystery of his time, and his personal attitude toward the unfortunate persons who were thought to be "possessed" was eminently kind and humane.

"*Magnalia Christi Americana*." The work upon which Cotton Mather expended his best talents, the *magnum opus* of Puritanism in America in fact, was his *Magnalia Christi Americana, or the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702). It was composed in seven books containing (1) the antiquities or the founding of the colonies; (2) the lives of the governors; (3) the lives of sixty famous divines; (4) an account of Harvard College and the lives of its eminent graduates; (5) the ecclesiastical history of the churches of New England; (6) a record of many illustrious providences; and (7) the various wars of the Lord, or the conflicts of the church against spiritual adversaries, Indians, and the like. This big book has become a veritable storehouse of information and suggestion for later annalists, historians, and students of colonial times. Though altogether untrustworthy unless supported by some other authority, it is indispensable for an understanding of the Puritan temper and mind. Professor Barrett Wendell, the author of the standard life of Cotton Mather, says of the *Magnalia*: "The prose epic of New England Puritanism it has been called, setting forth in heroic mood the principles, the history, and the personal character of the fathers. The principles, theological and disciplinary alike, are stated with clearness, dignity, and fervor. The history, though its less welcome phases are often highly emphasized and its details are hampered by no deep regard for minor accuracy, is set forth

with sincere ardor which makes its temper more instructive than that of many more trustworthy records. And the life-like portraits of the Lord's chosen, though full of quaintly fantastic phrases and artless pedantries, are often drawn with touches of enthusiastic beauty."<sup>1</sup>

**Jonathan Edwards.** The greatest single figure produced by Puritanism and the Calvinistic theology was Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). His intellect is recognized as the profoundest of the colonial period, and he is still ranked as a prominent philosophical thinker of the eighteenth century. In comparison with the Mathers and other noted New England divines, he lived a quiet and uneventful life, entering but slightly into the social and political conflicts of his times. Born in Connecticut in 1703 and descended from a family of distinguished preachers, it was but natural that he should be educated for the ministry at Yale College in New Haven. He was extremely precocious, especially in his early interest in philosophical treatises, such as John Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding," which he read with delight at fourteen. Before he was twelve, he had himself written a controversial letter on the nature of spiritual as opposed to materialistic opinions and a rather pretentious scientific paper on the habits of spiders. He entered college at thirteen and was graduated with first honors at seventeen. For a time he continued his studies along with his duties as a tutor at Yale, and shortly afterward he was ordained as a minister. He accepted the pastorate of the Northampton church, and his preaching here is said to have prepared the way for two notable revivals, the second one, in connection with Whitefield's visit to New England in 1740, being known as the "Great Awakening." He finally became so severe in his ideas of church discipline that a division arose in his congregation, and after almost a quarter of a century of service he was forced to withdraw from the

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*A Literary History of America*, p. 50.

Northampton church. He took up mission work among the Indians in the frontier town of Stockbridge and continued to preach and write. Here he composed his great work on the *Freedom of the Will*. It was published in 1754, and so profound was its effect at home and abroad, especially in Scotland, where philosophic writing and Calvinistic theology were highly esteemed, that Edwards was at once recognized as one of the great thinkers of his day. After about seven years of seclusion at Stockbridge, he was called to be President of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. But his election to the position was but a prelude to his death; for an epidemic of smallpox broke out shortly afterward among the students, and he felt it to be his duty to set them an example by submitting to the then little understood method of treatment by inoculation. Though every known precaution was taken to prevent fatal results, the distinguished patient died from the effects of the inoculation.

*His marriage.* One of the most pleasing chapters of Edwards's life is that pertaining to his courtship and marriage. His own description (written when he was twenty) of the beautiful girl of thirteen, Sarah Pierpont, of New Haven, who was soon to become his bride, is illustrative of the best prose of the colonial period. It admirably shows Edwards's tendency toward mysticism and idealism, and it is clearly suggestive of the highly spiritualized sentiment which we find so prominent in the later New England school of writers known as transcendentalists.

They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of the Great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with

him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it, and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly, and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her.

"*The Freedom of the Will.*" *The Freedom of the Will* is a masterpiece of subtle reasoning and a recognized classic in philosophical literature. Though it is not so vital to us, inasmuch as the trend of modern thought seems to be adverse to the discussion of such unsolvable theological problems, the apparent contradiction of the doctrine of the freedom of man's will with the doctrine of God's preordained plan and foreknowledge of the progress of the universe was one of profound interest to our Puritan fathers. Edwards assumed the position of the subordination of man's will to the play of circumstance, and argued for the complete ascendancy of God's will. Just about a century after the publication of *The Freedom of the Will*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, as Professor Barrett Wendell has shown, severely satirized the whole system of logic whereby Edwards proved the soundness of his position. In "The Deacon's Master-piece," Holmes proved that a chaise built of equal strength in all its parts would wear out all at once. The absurdity of the conclusion is evident, and yet the logic is unanswerable if you admit the premises. So it is with Edwards's Calvinistic theology; if you accept his premises, you will be forced to admit the justness of his conclusions. Holmes implies that Edwards's influence lasted just about a hundred years



and then suddenly collapsed. The chaise was Calvinism, and Jonathan Edwards was the deacon in the poem. The poet ironically concludes his satire with the couplet,

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.  
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

The style of *The Freedom of the Will* is clear and forceful, even though the abstruseness of the subject-matter sometimes makes the thought hard to grasp. The few readers who are attracted to this philosophical treatise, readily and even enthusiastically affirm their admiration of the logical force of its thought and the clearness of its style.

*His Sermons: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."* Much has been written of Edwards's sermons and the peculiar powers of his public delivery. The theme most frequently adverted to by our historians in writing about Edwards as a preacher is that illustrated in the fearful sermon called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." It is said that so vivid was the preacher's imagery and so real was the terrible punishment he portrayed, that his auditors trembled and cried out in distress even in the midst of his discourse. He was himself quiet and calm in the reading of his sermons,—he almost always spoke with his manuscript before him,—but the clearness and vividness of his portrayals and the terrible sincerity of his utterances wrought his hearers into a frenzy of excitement. Another theme which Edwards occasionally dwelt upon was the goodness, mercy, and tender love of God toward sinful man, and if he excited his hearers to frenzy in his portrayal of the tortures of the doomed sinner, he also wrought them into an ecstasy of delight at the prospect of a spiritual union with a Being of such loving tenderness, marvellous beauty, and infinite mercy. He was, of course, a strict Calvinist in his theology, and he gave all the powers of his great mind to prove by logic the truth of the Calvinistic doctrines;

but it must not be forgotten that he was a man of wonderful sweetness, purity, and spiritual power in his private life. In him were concentrated all of the higher ideals of his Puritan ancestors. Though his works are beyond the interest and capacity of most young readers, we may safely assume that his is the profoundest mind that expressed itself in our early literature.

#### LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

##### **Characteristics of the literature of the Middle Colonies.**

With two notable exceptions, namely, Woolman's *Journal* and Franklin's *Autobiography*, the literary productions in the Middle Colonies were rather mediocre. New York was settled by the Dutch, and so played little or no part in the early development of American literature in English, though its early history later furnished Washington Irving with a theme for his delightful burlesque called *Knickerbocker's History of New York* and also with material for some of his best tales and sketches. Pennsylvania and New Jersey produced a number of fairly good writers, and when Franklin began his successful publishing business, Philadelphia became the rival of Boston as the intellectual center of the colonies. William Penn, the founder of the Quaker colony in Pennsylvania, wrote some letters well worth reading as a revelation of his equable and peace-loving nature. In fact, the whole influence of Penn's colony was toward material comfort, spiritual freedom, and popular education, all of which are conducive to the development of literature and the other arts of peace. Not entirely in contrast with the Quaker spirit was the extreme utilitarian philosophy of Benjamin Franklin; for industry, frugality, prudence in business, and practical honesty are quite as distinctive of the Quaker's character as are purity, simplicity, and spirituality. But undoubtedly the Quaker spirit is

most perfectly represented in the eighteenth century by John Woolman, just as in the nineteenth century it is best represented by his admiring editor, John Greenleaf Whittier.

**John Woolman's "Journal."** The saintly Quaker preacher, John Woolman (1720-1772), was born on a New Jersey farm. He became an early advocate of the abolition of slavery, and his whole life was a protest against all kinds of cruelty and oppression. Though Woolman was an uneducated man, he felt called by the "inner voice" to go about the colonies preaching the beautiful Quaker doctrines of obedience to the spirit of God as revealed by conscience, purity of life, evenness of temper, non-resistance to evil, and tenderness and kindness toward all of God's creatures. By his preaching, and especially by the purity and sanity of his own example, he attracted many early adherents to the anti-slavery cause and led many souls to accept his own Quaker doctrines. In a characteristic sentence he says, "I have often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God," and so, early in his career, he began to record his spiritual and temporal experiences in his *Journal*. The book has been called "the sweetest and purest autobiography in the language." Charles Lamb advised his readers to "get the writings of John Woolman by heart"; Henry Crabb Robinson spoke of the style of Woolman's *Journal* as one "of the most exquisite purity and grace"; and Whittier in his preface to his edition of the *Journal* says of it that one becomes "sensible, as he reads, of a sweetness as of violets." In spite of these encomiums, the average young reader of today will hardly find the subtle spirituality of the style and subject-matter of this quiet record of a Quaker soul to be suited to his interests and tastes. However, Woolman's life was so pure and his soul so sensitive to the finer spiritual influences that we may unhesitatingly pronounce this uneducated tailor to be an early American apostle of "sweetness

and light." The following excerpt from the *Journal* will illustrate Woolman's quality.

I kept steadily to meetings; spent first-days afternoons chiefly in reading the scriptures and other good books; and was early convinced in my mind, that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures—that as the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world—that, as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal sensible creatures, to say we love God as unseen and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by his life, or by life derived from him, was a contradiction in itself.

**Thomas Godfrey.** One poet of the Middle Colonies deserves to be remembered not only as the author of the first tragedy written and acted in America, but for the real merit and high promise of some of his juvenile poetical efforts. Thomas Godfrey (1736–1763) was born in Philadelphia. After he had attended school for a few months, he was apprenticed to a watchmaker. He took an active part in the French and Indian War, serving under Colonel George Washington, and was later engaged in business in Wilmington, North Carolina. He seems to have been steadily attracted toward literature. He studied and found inspiration in the works of Chaucer, wrote heroic couplets in the manner of Pope and Dryden, and composed a tragedy in blank verse after the manner of the Elizabethan dramatists. This last, "The Prince of Parthia,"<sup>1</sup> has become noteworthy as the first serious dramatic composition produced in America. It was composed in 1759, published in 1765, and played by a professional company at Philadelphia in 1767. It is written in somewhat high-sounding and extravagant

<sup>1</sup>This play was reprinted twice in 1917, in A. H. Quinn's *Representative American Plays* and in a separate volume edited by Archibald Henderson, and again in 1918 in M. J. Moses' *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*, Vol. I.

blank verse, but it has in it some good qualities as a poetical tragedy and as an acting play. It shows unmistakable evidences of close imitation of some passages in Shakespeare's tragedies; we must remember, however, that it was the work of a very young man and that the imitation of English works was a common custom of the day. In its purely artistic and literary appeal it is certainly a distinct advance upon the somber and terrifying poetry of the Puritan muse as represented by Wigglesworth in "The Day of Doom."

**Benjamin Franklin.** If Jonathan Edwards represents the highest attainment of the Puritan mind in the metaphysical and spiritual realm, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) represents the highest success in the practical affairs of life. Though born and reared in Boston, Franklin spent the most productive period of his life in Philadelphia, and hence we may speak of him as the representative of the Middle Colonies. The larger part of his enduring literary productions properly belongs to the Revolutionary period, but his early connection with journalism in the colonies, his publication of *Poor Richard's Almanac* from 1732 to 1757 (for the years 1733 to 1758), his numerous essays, his papers on scientific and practical subjects, his humorous and satiric sketches, his reports of his experiences before the English Parliament, all written before 1765, make it advisable to discuss this great man — printer, inventor, statesman, patriot, philosopher, philanthropist, and writer — in the Colonial, rather than in the Revolutionary period.

*His early life.* The facts of Franklin's life are well known. The eleventh and youngest son of a soap boiler and tallow chandler, he was born in Boston, January 17, 1706. He was sent to school during parts of two years and then apprenticed to the printer's trade under his eldest brother, owner of one of the early American newspapers, *The New England Courant*. Franklin had little formal education, but he was a close student and a careful and tireless reader;

and naturally in his trade of printer he soon acquired a good practical English education. He wrote some brief essays



*Courtesy of the Bostonian Society*

THE PRESS AND TYPE CASES USED BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

in imitation of Addison's *Spectator* papers, a volume of which he found in his father's library. During the night he slipped them under the door of his brother's printing shop, and was pleased to find that his compositions were deemed

worthy of publication and that they attracted considerable favorable comment when they appeared in print. Dissatisfied with the treatment he was receiving at the hands of his brother, Franklin, having been accidentally freed from the bonds of his apprenticeship by a legal ruse of his brother's, ran away when he was seventeen years old, passed through New York, and landed in Philadelphia, where he found employment in his trade. Everyone knows the story of his ludicrous entry into Philadelphia, as it is described in the *Autobiography*. Franklin seems to take keen delight in telling how he walked down Market Street, his pockets stuffed with his extra shirt and stockings, a big puffy roll under each arm, while he was eating on a third, thus provoking by his comical appearance the laughter of Miss Deborah Read, the young woman who afterward became his wife.

*His later attainments.* By his industry and energy, Franklin prospered in his trade and presently attracted the attention of Governor Keith, who promised him letters of credit and sent him to England to buy a printing outfit. The governor failed him, and Franklin found himself in London without money or credit. He managed to get work at his trade, and was thus enabled to make a study of the most advanced methods of printing as practiced in England. After eighteen months he returned to Philadelphia, bought *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, and began a publishing business on his own account. He soon rose to a position of influence and prominence in the colony. His almanacs, the first of which was printed in 1732 for the year 1733, contained, besides the regular information in such publications, a lot of useful and entertaining matter, including the quaint proverbs and humorous sayings of Richard Saunders, or "Poor Richard," the supposed author of the almanacs. The publications became exceedingly popular and profitable, as many as 10,000 copies being sold annually. Franklin's success as a publisher was now assured. Presently he

had accumulated for himself a very comfortable fortune, and he retired from active business to devote himself to public services of one kind or another. He projected many schemes for bettering the life of his city and the colonies

**Poor Richard, 1733.**

A N

# Almanack

For the Year of Christ

**1 7 3 3,**

**Being the First after I EAP YEAR:**

|                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <i>And makes five the Creation</i>   | Years |
| By the Account of the E. Rom. Gricks | 2241  |
| By the Latin Church, when O cm Y     | 6932  |
| By the Computation of W M            | 5742  |
| By the Roman Chronology              | 5682  |
| By the Jewish Rabbies                | 5494  |

*Wherein is contained*

The Ionations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Falis, Courts, and observable Days

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina.

By **RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.**

**PHILADELPHIA:**  
Printed and sold by **B. FRANKLIN**, at the New Printing Office near the Market.

TITLE PAGE OF FIRST ISSUE OF POOR RICHARD

generally. He was especially interested in various educational projects, and he is now revered as the founder of the Philadelphia Library, of the academy which eventually became the University of Pennsylvania, and of the American Philosophical Society. He very greatly improved the postal service of the city when he became postmaster of



Philadelphia, and afterward, when he was appointed postmaster general, of the whole colony. He invented many useful devices, among them the Franklin stove and the lightning rod, and he refused to take out patents, preferring to give his inventions to the public without restrictions. In scientific investigations Franklin made notable advances, particularly in his electrical experiments, in which he demonstrated that lightning was but a manifestation of electricity. He was regarded as one of the wisest investigators of his day, and the leading foreign nations vied with each other in awarding him distinguished honors for his scientific discoveries.

*His services to the government.* His participation in the foreign and domestic politics of his country was so large that we can merely glance at his activities in this sphere. He was sent to England to represent the colony in several disputes that had arisen with the proprietors, and his success in clearing up these troubles led to his appointment on a commission to protest against the policy of the English government in enforcing the Stamp Act and other obnoxious laws. He remained in England for about eighteen years in all, and during this time he served well the interests of the colonies. While he made a profound impression upon the English government and succeeded for a time in preventing drastic action against the colonists, he was unable to secure permanent relief, and he finally returned to America to become an ardent supporter of the Revolution and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Perhaps the best service he rendered to the cause was his successful mission to France to secure the aid of that country in our struggle against England. He remained in France for a number of years, representing later the new government at the French court, where he was by far the most admired and courted man in the diplomatic circle. Upon his return to America in 1785, he was chosen governor of

Pennsylvania, elected to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, and honored in many other ways by his countrymen. He died February 12, 1790, one of the best-loved and most highly respected citizens of the new republic. Among our Revolutionary heroes he shares with Washington the



*From a painting by Henry Bacon*

FRANKLIN IN HIS GARDEN

love and gratitude of the nation, and doubtless, through the familiar proverbs of the almanacs and the widely read *Autobiography*, his personality is even better known than that of the "Father of his Country."

*His philosophy: the almanacs.* Franklin's philosophy of life has been sometimes condemned as entirely too practical and utilitarian. There is no question but that there is too much emphasis on the material and too little on the spiritual in his view of life; but we must remember that such a practical philosophy as Franklin preached from his pulpits of newspaper and almanac was needed to balance the extreme idealism of such men as Jonathan Edwards among the Puritans and John Woolman among the Quakers. It

was through the almanacs that Franklin reached his largest audience, for his publications of this kind were well thumbed in practically every household of the colonies. The selections of verse, witty sayings, amusing sketches, and bits of superstitious lore added something to the popularity of the almanacs, but it was the practical proverbs and utilitarian philosophy which made the deepest and most abiding impression on the colonial mind. In the last of the almanacs, the one for 1758, Poor Richard gathered up the best of all the proverbs in a final discourse in the form of a report of "Father Abraham's Speech." It is said that this compendium of Poor Richard's sayings was by far the most widely read piece of colonial literature. It was translated into practically every modern foreign language; since its first publication it has been printed in more than four hundred editions. Under various titles the discourse was struck off on broadsheets and freely distributed among the poorer working classes to encourage thrift, industry, frugality, prudence, perseverance, and honesty. The following proverbs or "Sayings of Poor Richard" taken from "Father Abraham's Speech," though by no means all original, will illustrate the kind of maxims which Franklin was constantly repeating in his almanacs.

1. Be ashamed to catch yourself idle.
2. Drive thy business, let not that drive thee.
3. Light strokes fell great oaks.
4. Three removes are as bad as a fire.
5. He that by the plow would thrive  
Himself must either hold or drive.
6. At a great pennyworth, pause awhile.
7. Plow deep while sluggards sleep  
And you shall have corn to sell and to keep.
8. A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees.
9. If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow  
some; for he who goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing.
10. Creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and  
times.

11. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.
12. Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that.

*The "Autobiography."* Though Franklin was not primarily an author, for the best efforts of his life were given to business, diplomacy, statesmanship, and practical philanthropy, he succeeded in writing the now most widely read "classic" of the two literary periods in which his life falls. The *Autobiography* is a book which everyone, particularly every American, should read. It is full of practical wisdom, sound advice, and the revelation of a fascinating personality—all presented in an admirably lively, forceful, and simple prose style. The book is preëminently human and natural, and richly deserves the high rank it has attained. It is unquestionably the one outstanding masterpiece of our early literature. Further analysis of or quotation from this "classic" is unnecessary, for every American boy and girl should read the entire book.<sup>1</sup>

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES SUITABLE FOR HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND OUTSIDE READING

##### General Reference Books for American Literature

Starred volumes are especially valuable for high-school libraries.

- \*S. L. WHITCOMB, *Chronological Outlines of American Literature*; Macmillan, N. Y., 1894.
- \*CHARLES F. RICHARDSON, *American Literature*; Putnam, N. Y., 1897.
- BARRETT WENDELL, *A Literary History of America*; Scribner, N. Y., 1901.
- \*W. P. TRENT, *A History of American Literature*; Appleton, N. Y., 1904.
- \*THEODORE STANTON, editor, *A Manual of American Literature*; Putnam, N. Y., 1909. (This volume contains in greatly reduced form Moses Coit Tyler's four volumes on the history of Colonial and Revolutionary literature, together with chapters by various hands on the different classes of American writers of the nineteenth century. Valuable as a reference volume or handbook.)

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent illustrated school edition edited by George B. Aiton, in the Canterbury Classics, Rand McNally & Co., Chicago.

- \*W. B. CAIRNS, *A History of American Literature*; Oxford University Press, N. Y., 1916.
- \**Cambridge History of American Literature*; 3 vols., Cambridge Press, Cambridge, England, and N. Y., 1917-1919.
- E. A. and G. L. DUYCKINCK, *Cyclopædia of American Literature, Embracing Personal and Critical Notices of Authors and Selections from Their Writings*; 2 vols., Scribner, N. Y., 1856.
- \*STEDMAN and HUTCHINSON, *Library of American Literature*; 11 vols., Benjamin, N. Y., 1888-90.
- ALDERMAN, HARRIS, and KENT, *Library of Southern Literature*; 16 vols., Martin and Hoyt, Atlanta, 1907-1913.
- \*A. B. HART, *American History Told by Contemporaries*; 4 vols., Macmillan, N. Y., 1898. (This is a valuable reference book both for history and for literature classes.)
- Old South Leaflets*; Directors of Old South Meeting House, Boston, various dates. (The leaflets have been bound in six or more volumes, and in this form they afford much good miscellaneous source-reading in American history and literature.)

**Special Reference Books for Colonial Literature<sup>1</sup>**

*1. History of Literature and Selections*

- \*TYLER, *History of American Literature, Colonial Period, 1617-1765*; 2 vols., Putnam, N. Y., 1897. (Also Student's Edition in one volume, 1909.)
- TRENT and WELLS, *Colonial Prose and Poetry*; 3 vols., Crowell, N. Y., 1901.
- \*W. B. CAIRNS, *Selections from Early American Writers, 1607-1800*; Macmillan, N. Y., 1909. (This is the best single volume reference book on the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods. It contains brief biographical sketches and abundant selections for high-school or college classes.)
- STEDMAN and HUTCHINSON, *Library of American Literature*, Vols. I and II.
- HART, *American History Told by Contemporaries*, Vols. I and II.

*2. Later Poetry Dealing with Colonial Times*

- LONGFELLOW, "The Skeleton in Armor," "Hiawatha," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," "Evangeline," etc.

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<sup>1</sup>The important works named in the body of the text are not listed here.

SCOLLARD, "The First Thanksgiving."

HOLMES, "The Pilgrim's Vision," "On Lending a Punch Bowl," "Song for the Centennial Celebration of Harvard," "The Deacon's Masterpiece," "The Broomstick Train; or, The Return of the Witches," etc.

ENGLISH, "The Burning of Jamestown."

WHITTIER, "The Preacher."

THACKERAY, "Pocahontas."

LANIER, "Psalm of the West."

(See Burton E. Stevenson's *Poems of American History*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1908, for fuller list of poems dealing with the Colonial Period.)

### 3. Later Fiction Dealing with Colonial Times

IRVING, *Knickerbocker's History of New York* (humorous), "Rip Van Winkle," etc.

COOPER, *The Leather-Stocking Tales*,—*The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Prairie*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Deerslayer* (some of these may be classed in Revolutionary times),—*The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (War of King Philip of Pokanoket), *The Red Skins*, *The Red Rover*.

SIMMS, *The Yemassee, a Romance of Carolina*.

COOKE, *My Lady Pocahontas, Fairfax*.

HAWTHORNE, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Grandfather's Chair*, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, and *Twice-Told Tales* (especially "The Gray Champion," "The Gentle Boy," "The Maypole of Merry Mount," and "Legends of the Province House," including "Howe's Masquerade," "Edward Randolph's Portrait," "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," "Old Esther Dudley," etc.)

PAULDING, *The Dutchman's Fireside*.

STIMSON, *King Noanett, a Story of the Devon Settlers in Old Virginia and Massachusetts Bay*.

HOLLAND, *The Bay Path, a Tale of New England Colonial Life*.

EGGLESTON, *Pocahontas and Powhatan*.

AUSTIN, *Standish of Standish, Betty Alden, etc.*

BARR, *A Bow of Orange Ribbon* (Dutch New York), *Black Shilling* (Salem witchcraft).

JOHNSTON, *To Have and To Hold, Prisoners of Hope, Audrey, etc.*

SEDGWICK, *Hope Leslie, or Early Times in Massachusetts, etc.*

4. *Essays and Historical Works Dealing with Colonial Times*

EMERSON, "Historical Discourse on the Second Centennial of the Incorporation of the Town of Concord."

LOWELL, "New England Two Centuries Ago," and "Witchcraft" (in *Literary Essays*, Vol. II).

LODGE, *English Colonies in America*.

DOYLE, *English Colonies in America* (3 vols.).

DRAKE, *The Making of New England, The Making of Virginia, The Middle Colonies*.

FISKE, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, The Beginnings of New England, The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America*.

EARLE, *Colonial Days in Old New York, Costume of Colonial Times, Customs and Fashions in Old New England*.

PARKMAN, *Historical Works*. (These give a trustworthy and entertaining account of the struggle for supremacy in America, portraying particularly the French settlements and Indian life in connection. See the discussion of Parkman on pp. 227, 228.

## II. THE REVOLUTIONARY AND FORMATIVE PERIOD, 1765-1800

### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

**The Revolutionary period.** Strictly speaking, the Revolution extends from the beginning of hostilities in 1775 to the conclusion of peace in 1783; but for a survey of Revolutionary literature it is necessary, in order to get an adequate conception of the political, patriotic, and general literary productions incident to the period, to include the years immediately preceding and immediately following the actual conflict. We have therefore chosen the year of the Stamp Act Congress, 1765, which marks the first formal protest by the colonies against the mother country, and the year 1800, marking the turn of the century and the election of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, as the inclusive dates of the Revolutionary and Formative period of our literature.

**General characteristics.** The literature of these tumultuous and significant years in the history of our nation is naturally colored by the important activities of the times, and hence is largely controversial in nature, the first part of the period presenting the controversy between the colonies and the English government, or the Whigs and the Tories; and the second part of the period showing the controversy resulting from the conflicting interests of the various colonies, which finally crystalized in the two opposing political parties that arose out of the discussion of the nature and limitations of the newly formed constitutional government. Hence this is the age *par excellence* of the orator and the statesman. Patriotic speeches, state papers, governmental essays, and political pamphlets of every kind abound and make up the distinctive literature of the period.



Poetry becomes more prominent than it was in the colonial period, but still takes a minor position, being largely satirical or national and patriotic in tendency, and strongly colored by the prevailing political thought of the times. Very little purely artistic literature of any kind was produced; native drama was in its infancy; not until the very end of the period did imaginative poetry and fiction emerge, and even then only two names stand out with any distinct prominence or promise—namely, Philip Freneau in poetry and Charles Brockden Brown in prose fiction. Practically all the important writers of the period are satirists, political essayists, publicists, and statesmen. While this controversial and political literature of Revolutionary times is extremely valuable as a basis of historical interpretation, and while some of it, by virtue of the sincere passion, patriotic fervor, and moral earnestness which gave it birth, approaches the borders of art, yet it is not purely artistic literature, and the high-school student may pass rapidly over this period of our literary history, so far as making a minute study of its products is concerned.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**Growth of the opposition to British rule.** To enable one to gain a satisfactory comprehension of the literature of the Revolutionary period, a brief résumé of the events leading toward a firmer union of the various colonies will be essential. Though as early as 1760 some distinct mutterings were heard, it was not until 1765 that the condemnation of England's governmental policies became open and formidable. About this time the agitation concerning the method by which the colonies should be governed crystalized itself in the colonial mind in the familiar phrase "no taxation without representation." The Navigation Acts, Acts of Trade, and other forms of restrictive legislation aimed at

the colonies were resisted by open violation and smuggling operations. The British government issued Writs of Assistance in 1761, giving authority to customs officials to search for smuggled goods in any suspected place. This aroused immense indignation in the colonies.<sup>1</sup> The Stamp Act was passed in 1765, and in October of that year the different colonies sent representatives to New York to consider the situation and make a formal protest. This convention was known as the Stamp Act Congress. It drew up a succinct "Declaration of Rights and Grievances of the Colonists," and sent it, along with a petition for relief, to the English government. The Stamp Act was repealed, but Parliament declared its right to tax the colonies, and passed a new tariff or excise tax measure almost immediately. This measure brought forth an increasing storm of protest from the colonists, and as a compromise all the duties imposed, except that on tea, were repealed. The British government sent troops to Massachusetts to enforce its authority, and in 1770 open violence between the citizens and the soldiers resulted in the death of five colonists. The English authorities shortly afterward withdrew the troops from Boston, where the massacre occurred, and thus avoided further immediate trouble. Committees of Correspondence between the different colonial governments were appointed, and under the leadership of such men as Samuel Adams in Massachusetts and Patrick Henry in Virginia the spirit of united resistance against the mother country was kept alive. The first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1774. In 1775 the famous Boston Tea Party took place, and a conflict of arms between the colonists and the British soldiers became at once imminent. Hostilities began almost immediately, the celebrated fights at Concord and Lexington taking place on April 19, 1775. The Second Continental

<sup>1</sup>See the account of Otis's speech, p. 49.

Congress convened at Philadelphia in 1775, and on July 4, 1776, independence was declared. The war was brought to a successful conclusion with the defeat of Cornwallis in 1781, and with the treaty of peace which followed in 1783, England recognized the complete independence of the thirteen American Colonies.

**Formation of the Union.** Then came the period of the formation of the new government. The Continental Congress was acknowledged to be but a makeshift to meet the needs of the colonists during the war. The Articles of Confederation under which Congress operated were but a loosely defined set of agreements, with no means of enforcement except through the acquiescence and voluntary support of the various colonies. So long as the war lasted, the spirit of mutual protection banded the colonies together; and the final success of the Revolution undoubtedly gave a strong impetus toward the continuation of centralized power in the federal government. But naturally differences of opinion and jealousies between the different governments arose, and the confederation was seriously threatened. From 1783 to 1788 the life of the new government hung in the balance. Under the influence of Washington, Hamilton, Samuel Adams, and others, agitation for a convention began, and in 1787 the Federal Constitutional Convention assembled in Philadelphia. The many differences of opinion were finally settled, and the Constitution was framed upon the tri-partite plan of executive, legislative, and judiciary functions. The instrument was submitted to the states for ratification in the latter part of 1787, and during the next year occurred the great popular discussion of the merits and defects of the new scheme of federal government. The Constitution was finally adopted by eleven states, and Washington was the unanimous choice for the first president. During the following years there gradually sprang up two opposing parties, led respectively by Alexander

Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. "The final form taken by these two parties depended much upon the character of their leaders. Hamilton, a man of great personal force and of strong aristocratic feeling, represented the principle of authority, of government framed and administered by a select few for the benefit of their fellows. Jefferson, an advocate of popular government extended to a point never before reached, declared that his party was made up of those 'who identified themselves with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the most honest and safe, although not the most wise, depository of the public interest.'"<sup>1</sup>

**An estimate of Revolutionary literature.** Upon and around these historical facts revolves the great mass of our controversial literature which sprang up during this period. As Professor Moses Coit Tyler says: "The literature of our Revolution has everywhere the combative note, its habitual method is argumentative, persuasive, appealing, rasping, retaliatory; the very brain seems to be in armor; his wit is in the gladiator's attitude of offense and defense. It is a literature indulging itself in grimaces, in mockery, in scowls; a literature accented by earnest gestures meant to convince the people, or by fierce blows meant to smite them down. In this literature we must not expect to find art used for art's sake."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE ORATORS

**Nature of oratory.** Among the orators who supported the cause of the colonists were James Otis (1725-1783), Samuel Adams (1722-1803), and John Adams (1735-1826), all of Massachusetts, and Patrick Henry (1736-1799) of Virginia. Of these James Otis and Patrick Henry are

<sup>1</sup>A. B. Hart, *Formation of the Union*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Moses Coit Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783*, Vol. I, p. 6.

typical Revolutionary orators. Oratory is usually born of an occasion, and when the occasion has passed the oration becomes largely a mere memory to those who heard the spoken words. Hence there is little literary permanency in the popular oratory born of a moment and uttered under the stress of fiery emotion. The reputation of the orator survives, but his extemporaneous speeches, delivered under the excitement and inspiration of the occasion, usually pass away with the breath which gives them utterance. This is precisely what happened in the case of Otis, and it is almost precisely what happened in the case of Henry's passionate extemporaneous orations.

**James Otis.** The most famous of Otis's speeches is the one delivered in 1761 at Boston in opposition to the Writs of Assistance or warrants of search in private homes for smuggled goods. No authentic reproduction has come down to us, but John Adams, who heard the speech, made notes of it, and in his later reminiscences he spoke of Otis on this occasion as a flame of fire, and the hour of the delivery of the speech as the real birth hour of American independence. In the course of his argument Otis declared that the Navigation Acts were "a taxation law made by a foreign legislature without our consent," and this phrase in a slightly changed form became the chief slogan of the Revolutionary agitators. Otis was advocate-general of the colony, but he gave up this lucrative position under the crown rather than support the nefarious Writs of Assistance. He threw himself wholly into the cause of the colonists in their resistance to these oppressive laws and wrote several pamphlets distinguished by calmness and judicial poise quite in contrast with the passionate eloquence in his speeches; among them is the sound and conservative argument called "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved" (1764). In a personal affray with some of his political enemies, Otis suffered injuries from which he later lost his

mind and died, and thus he may be counted among the very earliest martyrs to the cause of American liberty and independence.

**Patrick Henry: his "Speech on Liberty."** Patrick Henry (1736-1799) was a typical Southern statesman, born of good family and representing the conservative and independent and at the same time emotional ideals of Virginia. He was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765, and here he first won fame in the discussion of the Stamp Act by making the famous comparison which brought out the cry of "Treason! Treason!" from the loyalist members. "Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First had his Cromwell; and George the Third,"—here the speaker was interrupted, but he calmly concluded in the midst of the cries of "Treason,"—"may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it." In 1775 he made another famous speech, which has come down to us through the report given by William Wirt, himself an excellent orator and prose writer of the early nineteenth century. How much of Henry's "Speech on Liberty" is due to Wirt's own composition from his memory of the speech, it is now impossible to tell; but there is no question of the masterly style, ardent passion, and moving power exhibited in the famous oration now made almost universally familiar by innumerable declamatory repetitions. It begins, "Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope," and ends with the magnificent peroration,

It is vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, "peace, peace!"—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery! Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

*Henry's later speeches.* In the discussions which followed the submitting of the Constitution to the several colonies for ratification, Henry opposed the adoption of the new form of federal government. He feared the results of too much concentration or centralization of power. He even went so far as to suggest that under the proposed plan the president might easily make himself king, and the colonies would again be subjected to the yoke of a monarchical form of government. In spite of Henry's opposition, however, Virginia finally adopted the Constitution. The later speeches of the great orator were more authentically recorded than the earlier famous one reported by Wirt, for they were taken down in shorthand, with perhaps a few verbal inaccuracies, as they were delivered in the Virginia Convention. The style shows all the powerful appeal of the traditional orator—climactic periods, exclamatory sentences, rhetorical questions, and passionate outbursts—but the quality is more purely argumentative and less perfervid than the highly emotional style of the "Speech on Liberty." All in all we may rank Patrick Henry as the most illustrious of our Revolutionary orators.

#### POLITICAL WRITERS

**Samuel Adams.** Samuel Adams (1722-1803) and his kinsman John Adams have been named among the orators, but their influence was probably greater as political writers than as speakers. Samuel Adams has been singled out by Englishmen as the man who was the greatest obstacle in the way of a peaceful adjustment between England and the colonies. He was an untiring enemy of compromise, and he wrote perhaps more—though he signed his name to very little of what he published—than any other of the early agitators. He prepared many reports, memorials, articles for the press, and state papers, all of which show his clear

and convincing style as a controversial writer. He directed the work of the Committee of Correspondence for Massachusetts, and became so vigorously aggressive in his opposition to England that he was not included in the general pardon which that country declared in 1775, a fact of which he was exceedingly proud. Samuel Adams was a skilful politician, a successful party manipulator, and a powerful political journalist, and he has been adjudged by historians to be the most influential of the Revolutionary agitators.

**John Adams.** John Adams (1735-1826), the cousin of Samuel Adams, was perhaps a more profound thinker and a more careful writer than his kinsman, and he eventually received higher political regard, being elected president in 1796 to succeed Washington; but his popular influence was not nearly so great as that of the elder Adams. He was what we may call a constitutional lawyer, basing his orations and pamphlets on the profound underlying principles of government rather than upon the principle of expediency and popular appeal. Though his writings command respect and admiration, the strong legal and logical bent of his mind robs them of much of that human element which is essential to literature.

**Tory pamphleteers.** It must not be assumed that all the good controversial writing was on one side of the questions at issue. There were some excellent loyalist pamphleteers, among them being Samuel Seabury (1729-1796), an Episcopal minister, later consecrated in Connecticut as the first bishop of the American Episcopal Church, the author of a number of attractive letters written under the pen-name of "A Westchester Farmer"; Joseph Galloway (1729-1803), a native of Maryland who moved to Philadelphia to practice law and there wrote a conservative pamphlet under the title of "Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain and the Colonies"; and Daniel Leonard (1740-1829), a graduate



of Harvard College and a Boston lawyer, author of strong loyalist newspaper articles signed "Massachusettensis."

**John Dickinson.** Along with these writers, though not of them, should be mentioned John Dickinson (1732-1808), of Philadelphia; author of many excellent conservative articles and pamphlets. The best known of his writings is a series of newspaper articles called "Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies" (1767-68). In these articles he tried to show the merits of both sides of the controversy and thus lead to a friendly settlement of the difficulties confronting the people. Professor Tyler says, "No other serious political essays of the Revolution equaled the 'Farmer's Letters' in literary merit, including in that term the merit of substance as well as of form."<sup>1</sup> These letters were published in practically all of the newspapers of the colonies and attracted a great deal of attention; they were also widely circulated in Europe, where they received serious consideration. When the war broke out, Dickinson became a staunch supporter of the colonial cause. He was also the author of the commonplace but at one time popular "Song for American Liberty."

**Alexander Hamilton.** When he was a boy of seventeen studying at King's College (now Columbia University) in New York City, Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) began his career as a political writer by his successful answers to the letters of "A Westchester Farmer"<sup>2</sup> in a series called "The Farmer Refuted." Hamilton was born in the West Indies and was at an early age thrown on his own resources. He entered business, but he showed such precocious literary abilities that he was urged by admiring friends to go to New York to seek an education. He entered heartily into the pre-Revolutionary agitation as orator, pamphleteer, and

<sup>1</sup>Moses Coit Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783*, Vol. I, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup>See above "Tory Pamphleteers."

statesman, and later became a powerful force in the formation and adoption of the Constitution and in the actual management of the government in the various important public offices which he held.

*"The Federalist."* The greatest service that Hamilton rendered to the new government was through a series of papers planned by him and written largely by him and James Madison, and now known as *The Federalist*. It was in 1787-88 that these papers first appeared in newspapers, but they were afterward collected into a volume, and this controversial document, written to explain and defend the new constitution, has become an authoritative statement of the nature and principles of constitutional government. The style of the work is restrained and dignified, striking in its simplicity and directness, and overwhelmingly convincing in its clearness and logical force. So uniform and decisive is the style that it is difficult to determine the authorship of the letters without direct outside information. John Jay wrote a few numbers, but to Hamilton and Madison belongs the credit of composing the great majority of the papers; and to Hamilton must be given the greater praise, because he conceived the plan and wrote the first, and at least three-fifths of the whole number, of the papers.

**Thomas Jefferson.** Upon Thomas Jefferson's tomb at Monticello, his home near Charlottesville, Virginia, are inscribed the following words, composed by himself:

HERE LIES BURIED  
THOMAS JEFFERSON  
AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,  
OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,  
AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

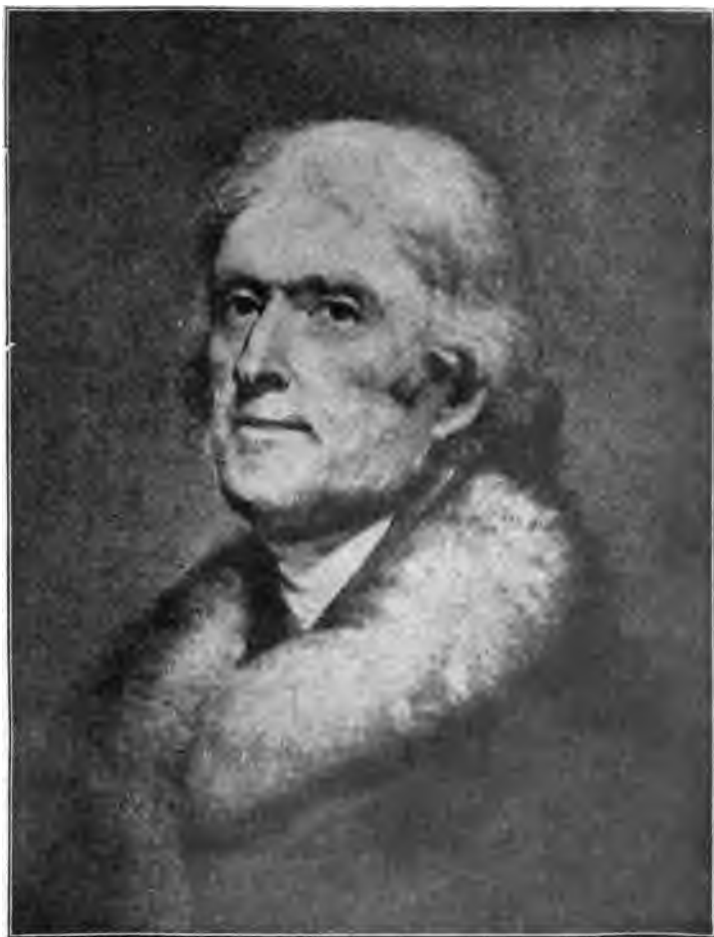
These three items may be summarized in the single idea of human liberty; for the first represents political liberty, the second religious liberty, and the third intellectual



ALEXANDER HAMILTON

liberty. Jefferson (1743-1826), was not primarily or intentionally an author in the restricted sense of that term, but he was well prepared to become one both by temperament and by training. In another age and country he might have become a great romantic writer as easily as he did become a great idealist in politics in the age and land in which he happened to live. Born in Albermarle County in 1743 and educated in the best schools of his day under the classical ideals, he naturally turned to politics as a career in the tumultuous times when the colonies were arrayed against foreign domination in the conduct of their local governments. He was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1769, and from this time on to the end of his life he devoted himself to the service of his country in one way or another. It is useless to review his public career, for the main items are known to all who read the elemental facts of our national history. It is to his writings and cultural interests that we must devote our attention.

*Jefferson's state papers: "The Declaration of Independence."* The first important state paper of Jefferson's which had any direct influence on the course of events was his "Instructions to the Virginia Delegates to the Congress of 1774." This was reprinted and sent abroad under the title "A Summary View of the Rights of America," and it is said that in this form it suggested to Edmund Burke some of the arguments he used in his great speech on "Conciliation with the American Colonies." The two other state papers by Jefferson which should not be omitted from any survey of our political classics are "The Declaration of Independence," composed in 1776, and the "First Inaugural Address," delivered in 1801 when he became third president of the United States. The last of these is a fine example of the formal political address, but it is to the first that we must give especial notice. The fact that Jefferson, one of the youngest



THOMAS JEFFERSON

men in the convention, should have been selected to draft the Declaration of Independence is sufficient proof of the confidence which his contemporaries had in his literary abilities, and his success in the task is attested by the universal esteem in which that document is still held, not only for its historical value as a landmark in the establishment of our nation, but for its excellent literary form. Jefferson succeeded in crystalizing in this great state paper the thought and emotion of a whole people, and at the same time he put the stamp of his own personality upon the instrument. The phraseology of the Declaration is, of course, partially borrowed from similar earlier declarations or bills of rights, and it is well known that there were numerous changes and corrections made when the paper was subjected to the revision of the convention. But the genius and spirit of the whole, the literary form and the passion which underlie it, belong to Jefferson, and to him we may unhesitatingly ascribe the authorship of the noblest political classic of our nation. The style is dignified and resonant and unmistakably clear and decisive, but at times somewhat stilted in its diction, and somewhat formal in its excessive parallelism. The sonorous roll of the opening sentence illustrates the quality of the style at its best.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

*His "Notes" on Virginia and his "Autobiography."* Most of the material in the ten large volumes of Jefferson's collected works consists of letters and state papers. There are several works, however, which rise to the importance of formal volumes. The *Notes on Virginia* (1784), prepared

in response to a request from the French government, is perhaps Jefferson's most ambitious book. It is carefully written and is full of interesting facts, figures, and descriptions of the country and the customs of those early days, but it is not to be classed as literature in the restricted sense. Jefferson's *Autobiography*, too, written after he had retired from active public life and was devoting himself to his estate, "Monticello," and to fostering the growth of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, is chiefly valuable as a storehouse of information concerning the public events in which the great commoner took part. But even if Jefferson's work as a whole is not primarily literary, there is in his personality a certain cultural richness which lends importance to him as a literary figure. He wrote an Anglo-Saxon grammar; he was a great reader; he was interested in music and painting; and he was especially devoted to architecture, as is evidenced by the charming beauty of his own home and by the elaborate drawings which he prepared in his scheme for the buildings of the University of Virginia. In fact, it is largely due to the idealism and culture of its aspiring and art-loving patron that this university today enjoys the distinction of a unique cultural atmosphere.

**George Washington: "The Farewell Address."** George Washington (1732-1799) was more of a soldier and a statesman than a writer or orator, but on certain impressive occasions in his life he delivered addresses which rise to the plane of noble political literature. The first of these public utterances which should be remembered is his brief "Address Delivered upon Surrendering to Congress his Commission as Commander in Chief of the Revolutionary Army" (1783); and another is the universally esteemed "Farewell Address to the American People" (1796). The last is in reality a state paper in the form of a dignified personal address by the great president to his friends and fellow-citizens. It comes as a fitting climax to Washington's public career. At

the end of his first term as president (1792) he asked James Madison to prepare for him a draft of a farewell address to the people, but when he accepted the nomination for a second term he put off the final preparation of the address until 1796. He then called Alexander Hamilton into consultation and prepared the great "Farewell Address." It is customary for our chief executives to get advice and suggestions from their cabinet officers in the preparation of practically all important state papers; hence there is no reason for depriving Washington of due credit for the composition of the "Farewell Address." The quiet dignity, lofty ideals, and inherent modesty of expression in the document are characteristic of the great personality who signed it. In the "Farewell Address" Washington strongly advocated the doctrine of the isolation of the American republic from European politics. In particular he warned the young nation to avoid permanent alliances<sup>1</sup> with European governments. It is worth while to note, in passing, that we have entirely outgrown this policy, as is clearly evidenced by the prominent part America has played in the great World War and the events which followed it.

**Thomas Paine: "Common Sense" and "The Crisis."** Among the essayists and journalists who took part in the agitation for American independence, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) deserves to be remembered as one of the most influential and, from a literary point of view, one of the best. A native of England, in 1774 he came to America near middle life, bearing a letter of recommendation from Benjamin Franklin. He secured journalistic employment in Philadelphia and at once plunged into the agitation for complete independence by writing his powerful pamphlet called "Common Sense" (1776). Tyler designates it "the first

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<sup>1</sup>Not *entangling* alliances. Thomas Jefferson, in his "First Inaugural Address," reiterated this doctrine in the familiar phrase, "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, *entangling alliances* with none."





*George Washington*

open and unqualified argument in championship of the doctrine of American independence." It took the public by storm. Every one was asking who could be the author of this impressive and bold pamphlet. Some attributed it to Samuel Adams and some to Benjamin Franklin. Paine kept his identity concealed, for it might have cost him his life to have acknowledged the authorship of this bold appeal to the colonists. He accepted employment in some clerical capacity in the army, and in this connection, soon after the appearance of his first pamphlet, he projected a series of articles under the general title of "The Crisis," the numbers to appear whenever he could bring them out. The first number, published in 1776, opened with the now familiar sentence, "These are the times that try men's souls." The first paragraph, a passage worth repeating in any period of national crisis, reads as follows:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

This is good, strong prose. The steady flow of the language and the nervous energy of the thought give the style a vitality and piquancy that make it at once attractive and convincing. There is no subtlety, no subterfuge, but a frank and direct, if somewhat rhetorical, appeal to the common sense of all readers. There is no doubt that at the critical time when they were put forth, Paine's pamphlets, as Washington himself acknowledged, were of great value in nerving the patriots to fight on against the terrible

odds which confronted them. There were sixteen numbers of "The Crisis" from 1776 to 1783, and together they make up a valuable contribution to our political literature.

*Paine's later works:* "*The Rights of Man*" and "*The Age of Reason*." In his later life Paine lost much of the prestige which his Revolutionary pamphlets had won for him in this country. He went to England and published a sharp reply to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, calling it *The Rights of Man* (1791). Then he slipped away to France, as if to avoid the storm which the publication of his reply raised in England. In France he mingled freely with the revolutionists in the terrible days of bloodshed and destruction, and was himself imprisoned and sentenced to be executed. While in prison he wrote *The Age of Reason* (1794), an attack on the Bible and the Christian religion, and thus brought on himself the opprobrium which has followed him to this day. After his release from prison he returned to America, where he died in 1809. Unfortunately Paine is more frequently referred to as an enemy of Christianity than as a patriot. He was undoubtedly a sincere lover of liberty, and we should give him full credit for the bold fight he made for our own independence and for human rights in general.

**St. John de Crèvecoeur.** One more prose work deserves mention here—namely, "The Letters from an American Farmer" (1782) by Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1731–1813). Born of a noble family in Normandy, Crèvecoeur was educated in England from his sixteenth to his twenty-third year, when he removed to America to engage in farming in New England and later in Pennsylvania. His "Letters from an American Farmer" represents an entirely different type of prose from the pamphlets we have been considering. Crèvecoeur had no special plea to make either for religious or political liberty or to encourage immigrants to the colonies. What he attempted to do was to give a

pleasing literary portrayal of rural life and scenes in America. There is an idyllic simplicity and charm in his treatment of the natural beauties of American scenery and of the simple pastoral life of the American farmer. His interpretation is that of a pleased and interested observer rather than that of an advocate or partisan. From an esthetic and literary point of view Crèvecoeur's book is superior to any other prose volume of its kind written in America during the eighteenth century. In these more stirring years of the twentieth century we may read with peculiar interest Crèvecoeur's definition of an American and his prophecy of the future greatness of the American people.

What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither an European, nor the descendent of an European: hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great "alma mater." Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men,<sup>1</sup> whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry, which began long since in the east. They will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe. Here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love his country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow, with equal steps, the progress of his labor. His labor is founded on the basis of nature—self-interest: Can it want a stronger allurement? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now,

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<sup>1</sup> This is doubtless the first use of the familiar metaphor of America as the melting-pot of the nations.



INDEPENDENCE HALL AS SEEN FROM INDEPENDENCE SQUARE

fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise, to feed and to clothe them all, without any part being claimed either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him,—a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God: can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labor, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence. This is an American.

### THE POETRY

**Revolutionary ballads.** The poetry of the Revolutionary period seldom rises above mediocrity. There were a number of ballads and patriotic songs which were popular in their day, and served well their purpose of amusing and cheering our ancestors, but hardly one of them is worthy of a permanent place in our literature. "The Song of American Liberty" by John Dickinson has already been mentioned. "Yankee Doodle," or "The Yankee's Return from Camp," originally written by Edward Bangs, a Harvard student, had a typical experience in its transitions, being sung in several varied versions to the delight of citizens and soldiers during the hard struggle for independence. As a tune and as a popular ballad it still retains its hold on the public. The ballad, to which many additional stanzas have been added from time to time, begins as follows:

Father and I went down to camp  
 Along with Captain Gooding  
 And there we see the men and boys  
 As thick as hasty pudding.

#### (CHORUS)

Yankee Doodle, keep it up,  
 Yankee Doodle, dandy,  
 Mind the music and the step,  
 And with the girls be handy.

Another typical ballad in the meter of "Yankee Doodle," literally bubbling over with satisfaction and delight at the discomfiture of the British general, the Earl of Cornwallis, is called "The Dance," and begins,

Cornwallis led a country dance,  
The like was never seen, sir,  
Much retrograde and much advance,  
And all with General Greene, sir.  
  
They rambled up and rambled down,  
Joined hands and off they run, sir,  
Our General Greene to Charlestown,  
The earl to Wilmington, sir.

The ballad of "Nathan Hale," or "Hale in the Bush," is a sort of refined or dressed up literary ballad, more dignified and self-conscious, hence less truly a popular ballad. It relates in a remarkably stimulating strain the capture and execution of the Revolutionary hero named in the title.

The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,  
A-saying "oh! hu-ush!" a-saying "oh! hu-ush!"  
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse,  
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush.  
  
"Keep still!" said the thrush as she nestled her young,  
In a nest by the road; in a nest by the road.  
"For the tyrants are near, and with them appear  
What bodes us no good, what bodes us no good."<sup>1</sup>

**Francis Hopkinson: "The Battle of the Kegs."** Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) of Philadelphia, signer of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey and holder of important political offices in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, among them the United States district judgeship for Pennsylvania, was the author of numerous satiric trifles and extended political allegories which brought him wide popularity. His satirical ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs,"

<sup>1</sup>For excellent complete selections of this type of popular verse, see Boynton's *American Poetry* or Cairns's *Early American Writers*.

is still, delightful reading. It was written to satirize the British troops who, when they discovered certain "infernal machines" in the form of kegs sent down the river by the patriots to annoy the British ships at Philadelphia, bravely began to fire on every floating object they saw in the river.

The cannons roar from shore to shore;  
The small-arms make a rattle,  
Since wars began, I'm sure no man  
E'er saw so strange a battle....

The kegs, 'tis said, tho' strongly made  
Of rebel staves and hoops, Sir,  
Could not oppose their pow'rful foes,  
The conqu'ring British troops, Sir.

From morn to night these men of might  
Display'd amazing courage;  
And when the sun was fairly down,  
Retir'd to sup their porrage....

Such feats did they perform that day  
Against these wicked kegs, Sir,  
That years to come, *if they get home*,  
They'll make their boast and brags, Sir.

*His prose.* Two of Judge Hopkinson's political allegories in prose were decidedly amusing to his contemporaries, and though they are rarely read today, they were of considerable importance in the development of American prose. "The Pretty Story" deals with the conflict between England, "the old farm," and America, "the new farm," and their "wives," the English Parliament and the colonial governments respectively. "The New Roof" is a presentation of the new form of government under the federal Constitution. Francis Hopkinson's son, Joseph Hopkinson (1770-1842), wrote in 1798 the words and music of the well-known patriotic song "Hail, Columbia."

**The Hartford Wits.** A school of writers with a more or less well-defined literary purpose sprang up in Connecticut



during the Revolution. There were ten or a dozen ambitious young college men, well versed in the classics and in the literary methods of the English writers of the eighteenth century, particularly those of Pope and Samuel Butler. They wrote political satires, long allegories and epics, and some religious poetry, and tried in a sort of concerted way to establish a standard of formal literature in America similar to the classical school in England. Most of these young literary aspirants were Yale men. Hartford rather than New Haven was the chief center of their later activities, and so they came to be known as the "Hartford Wits." Only three of them need demand our attention here — John Trumbull, Timothy Dwight, and Joel Barlow.

**John Trumbull.** John Trumbull (1750-1831) was the most popular and probably the most gifted of these three Hartford Wits. He was born in Connecticut in 1750. He showed remarkable precocity, learning to read before he was three years old, completing the Bible at the age of four, and learning many of Watts's hymns and composing similar verses himself even before he had learned to write. When his father was tutoring a lad of seventeen who was preparing to enter Yale College, the boy of seven, loitering about the room, showed more proficiency in his ability to read and construe Latin than did the youth of seventeen. He was allowed to take the lessons regularly thereafter, and he passed the entrance examinations at Yale with apparent ease at this early age. He did not enter college until he was thirteen, however, spending the intervening years in doing a considerable amount of reading in the classics. He graduated at Yale when he was seventeen, and then spent three years more in general reading and study, taking his master's degree when he was twenty. During these years he began to write both poetry and prose, mostly in imitation of the eighteenth-century English writers. With his friend Timothy Dwight he contributed essays to

two periodicals in imitation of Addison's *Spectator*, namely, *The Medler* and *The Correspondent*. Shortly after graduation Trumbull became a tutor at Yale, and during this period he wrote a long satiric poem on the hollow and impractical type of education then offered, especially for ministers and women, calling his production *The Progress of Dulness*. It consisted of three cantos, the first on "The Adventures of Tom Brainless," the second on "The Life and Character of Dick Hairbrain," and the third on "The Adventures of Miss Harriet Simper."<sup>1</sup>

"*McFingal*." Trumbull's most famous work, "*McFingal*," was begun in 1776 but not completed until 1782. It is a burlesque epic, written in the sing-song octosyllabic couplets which the English writer Samuel Butler had so successfully employed in *Hudibras*, his satire on the Puritans. So accurate was the imitation that several of Trumbull's couplets have been quoted as Butler's, especially this one:

No man e'er felt the halter draw,  
With good opinion of the law.

*McFingal* is a long-winded Tory constable, or squire, who thinks he is a great orator and a great power in colonial politics. Trumbull puts some extraordinarily ridiculous and blatant speeches into the pseudo-hero's mouth, and finally makes him the butt of the patriots' humorous wrath. In its finished form *McFingal* consists of four cantos, the first two being devoted to the "Town Meeting," morning and afternoon; the third, to "The Liberty Pole" or *McFingal*'s attack on the patriots' flag pole, his elevation to the top of it by a rope hooked to his middle, and his subsequent tarring and feathering; the fourth, to "The Vision," or *McFingal*'s "second sight" in a dark cellar, in which he is forewarned of all the defeats and disasters which were to befall the

<sup>1</sup>Professor Boynton suggests that the names represent three types of young people—Tom, Dick, and Harry,—the last becoming "Harriet" to fit the coquette. (*American Poetry*, page 608.)

Tories during the coming years. Fortunately for the accuracy of this so-called "vision," Trumbull waited until after the defeat of Cornwallis in 1782 to write this canto, thus learning the actual sequence of events before making his prophecies.

*Nature of the satire.* The poem is full of classical and historical lore and contains many allusions now unintelligible except with the help of the footnotes. Particularly effective are the burlesque imitations of and allusions to the great world epics, such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, the *Aeneid* of Vergil, and the *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* of Milton. The following passage from the third canto, describing McFingal's capture and elevation on the liberty pole, will illustrate the mock-epic style and the broad humor of the famous old political satire which so greatly amused our Revolutionary sires.

Swift turn'd M'Fingal at the view,  
And call'd to aid th' attendant crew,  
In vain; the Tories all had run,  
When scarce the fight was well begun;  
Their setting wigs he saw decreas'd  
Far in th' horizon tow'rd the west  
Amazed he view'd the shameful sight,  
And saw no refuge, but in flight:  
But age unwieldy check'd his pace,  
Though fear had wing'd his flying race;  
For not a trifling prize at stake;  
No less than great M'Fingal's back.  
With legs and arms he work'd his course,  
Like rider that outgoes his horse,  
And labor'd hard to get away, as  
Old Satan struggling on through chaos;  
'Till looking back, he spied in rear  
The spade-arm'd chief advanced too near:  
Then stopp'd and seized a stone, that lay  
An ancient landmark near the way;  
Nor shall we as old Bards have done,  
Affirm it weigh'd an hundred ton:

But such a stone, as at a shift  
A modern might suffice to lift,  
Since men, to credit their enigmas,  
Are dwindled down to dwarfs and pigmies.  
And giants exiled with their cronies  
To Brobdignags and Patagonias.  
But while our Hero turn'd him round,  
And tugg'd to raise it from the ground,  
The fatal spade discharged a blow  
Tremendous on his rear below:  
His bent knee fail'd, and void of strength,  
Stretch'd on the ground his manly length.  
Like ancient oak o'erturn'd, he lay,  
Or tower to tempests fall'n a prey,  
Or mountain sunk with all his pines,  
Or flow'r the plow to dust consigns,  
And more things else—but all men know 'em,  
If slightly versed in epic poem.  
At once the crew, at this dread crisis,  
Fall on, and bind him ere he rises,  
And with loud shouts and joyful soul,  
Conduct him prisoner to the pole.  
When now the mob in lucky hour  
Had got their en'mies in their power,  
They first proceed, by grave command,  
To take the Constable in hand.  
Then from the pole's sublimest top  
The active crew let down the rope,  
At once its other end in haste bind  
And make it fast upon his waistband;  
Till like the earth, as stretch'd on tenter,  
He hung self-balanced on his center.  
Then upwards, all hands hoisting sail,  
They swung him, like a keg of ale,  
Till to the pinnacle in height  
He vaulted, like balloon or kite.

**Timothy Dwight.** Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), another of the Hartford Wits, was associated with Trumbull in his early literary efforts. A grandson of Jonathan Edwards, Dwight was born in Massachusetts in 1752; was educated

at Yale, where he was for a time a tutor; and finally became a chaplain in the Continental Army. At the end of the Revolutionary War he became the pastor of the church at Greenfield Hill, Fairfield, Connecticut, and from 1795 to his death in 1817 he was the president of Yale College. He was a profuse prose writer, committing many of his sermons, the records of his travels, and his commonplace observations on contemporary life to paper, and a goodly portion of them also to print. He was an ambitious poet, composing a long Biblical epic in heroic couplets, *The Conquest of Canaan*, and another long poem of seven parts which he called *Greenfield Hill*. The different parts of this last-named work were professedly written in imitation of well known English poets, such as Pope, Butler, Goldsmith, and others. None of Dwight's poetry is read today by any except specialists, with perhaps a single exception in the instance of the patriotic lyric, "Columbia," which was highly admired during the Revolution and has since been frequently reprinted in lyric and patriotic collections. The closing stanza will illustrate the somewhat vaunting rhetorical style.

Thus, as down a lone valley, with cedars o'erspread,  
From war's dread confusion I pensively strayed,  
The gloom from the face of fair heav'n retired;  
The winds ceased to murmur; the thunders expired;  
Perfumes as of Eden, flowed sweetly along,  
And a voice, as of angels, enchantingly sung:  
Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,  
The queen of the world, and the child of the skies!

Still better known, because it has been preserved in our familiar church songs, is Dwight's devotional hymn, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord."

**Joel Barlow.** Joel Barlow (1754-1812), the third important member of the Hartford Wits, was born in Connecticut, graduated at Yale in 1778, and before the end of the Revolution became a chaplain in a Massachusetts brigade.

He engaged in several business enterprises connected with publication and book selling, compiling, among other things, a psalm book for use in Congregational churches. He began a patriotic epic called *The Vision of Columbus*, published it in 1787, and twenty years later expanded it into the *Columbiad* (1807), a poem in eleven long books written in heroic couplets. In its style this so-called epic is more bombastic and rhetorical than sublime or inspired. Professor Bronson calls it "a stage-coach epic, lumbering and slow." In this ambitious effort, which he innocently compared with the epics of Homer, Vergil, and Milton, Barlow has become the stock example of an author who overestimates his strength and attempts things entirely beyond his compass. In his later years Barlow went abroad and engaged in pamphleteering in England and in political intrigues in France. He was appointed to several diplomatic posts, finally losing his life in the famous retreat from Moscow, where he had gone in an effort to reach Napoleon and present his credentials as a representative from the United States. A few years before his death Barlow was living in France, and in Savoy he was served with a portion of his favorite dish made from American maize, or Indian corn, and he at once composed "The Hasty Pudding," a long mock-heroic poem. It seems that he could write the mock-epic better than the serious epic, for by the irony of fate, this playful bit of fancy, because of the fact that it is lighted up by a touch of the comic, is today far better known than the ponderous epic upon which Barlow based his hope for fame. The following brief quotation from "The Hasty Pudding" suggests strongly that the meter and style of the poem are closely modeled on Goldsmith's "The Traveller," though the mock-heroic tone is evident:

Dear Hasty Pudding, what unpromised joy  
Expands my heart to meet thee in Savoy!

Doom'd o'er the earth through devious paths to roam,  
Each clime my country and each house my home,  
My soul is soothed, my cares have found an end, .  
I greet my long-lost, unforgotten friend.

**Philip Freneau: his early life.** If Yale was the source of the most notable school of poets during the Revolutionary period, Princeton deserves the credit for sending forth the one poet of real genius whom America produced before the nineteenth century—namely, Philip Freneau (1752–1832). Of Huguenot descent, Freneau was born in New York City, but at an early age he was taken to New Jersey, and he is therefore usually reckoned among the worthies of the last-named state. He was educated in the schools of New York and at the College of New Jersey (Princeton), where he was graduated with distinction in 1771. He began writing poetry while he was in college, composing a long poem in heroic couplets on “The Prophet Jonah”; and collaborating with his classmate, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, the author of *Modern Chivalry*, he composed a patriotic poem called “The Rising Glory of America,” in the form of a colloquy, which Brackenridge delivered as a commencement ode at their graduation exercises at Princeton. These two friends with two other classmates, William Bradford and James Madison, were intensely American in their sympathies, and together they formed a Whig society and wrote satires against the Tories.

**Sailor, editor, and poet.** Freneau engaged in teaching for some time after his graduation, and then went to New York, where he published a number of polemical and political essays and many satires against the Tories and patriotic poems in favor of American liberty. Being of an adventurous turn of mind, he determined to go to sea. He shipped for Jamaica and soon became a proficient sailor. He continued to write poetry, composing several long poems on subjects suggested by his travels, as for example, “The

Jamaica Funeral" and "The Beauties of Santa Cruz." "The House of Night," an imaginative poem on death, is another notable production which belongs to this period. Finally he was captured by the British and confined for nearly two months in prison ships, an experience which inspired one of his most graphic and savage satires, "The British Prison Ship,"—

These Prison Ships where pain and horror dwell,  
Where death in tenfold vengeance holds his reign,  
And injur'd ghosts, yet unaveng'd, complain.

After his release he returned to Mount Pleasant, the family estate near Middletown Point, New Jersey, and again took up editorial work, becoming for several years the chief contributor to *The Freeman's Journal* published at Philadelphia. About this time he composed some of his best poems, notably the lament<sup>1</sup> for the patriots who fell under General Greene at Eutaw Springs, and some of his best sea poems, including "Captain Jones's Invitation," "The Sea Voyage," and "The Hurricane." After another period of adventurous seafaring as captain of several trading vessels, about 1791 Freneau returned to the shore to take up editorial work at first on the New York *Daily Advertiser* and shortly afterwards on *The National Gazette*, a journal which he founded in Philadelphia. He naturally became involved in the bitter political discussions of the times, taking sides with Jefferson and against Hamilton, and later, on account of his pro-French sentiments in connection with the Genêt affair, arousing the enmity of Washington himself. Freneau sought relief from these political turmoils by going to sea. He eventually returned to Mount Pleasant and lived on through the War of 1812 and the two following decades, finally losing his life in a fierce snowstorm in 1832.

<sup>1</sup>Usually called "Eutaw Springs." For full title see p. 78.



*Freneau's nature lyrics.* Freneau's most purely poetical work is a number of really excellent nature lyrics and imaginative poems. Professor Pattee<sup>1</sup> speaks eloquently of the evidences of early romanticism in Freneau's poetry, pointing out examples of early romantic influences in "The House of Night," "one of the earliest poems in that dimly lighted region which was soon to be exploited by Coleridge and Poe"; in his sea poems; in his imaginative treatment of Indian life, as in his "Indian Death Song" and "The Indian Burying-Ground"; and above all in his nature lyrics, which were distinctly in the Wordsworthian vein, as "The Dying Elm," "The Sleep of Plants," "To a Honey Bee," "To a Caty-did," and particularly in "The Wild Honeysuckle," a flawless nature lyric written in 1786, at least a dozen years before Wordsworth and Coleridge published the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). "The Wild Honeysuckle," his one almost perfect art lyric, is worthy of full quotation here.

#### THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,  
 Hid in this silent, dull retreat,  
 Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,  
 Unseen thy little branches greet:  
 No roving foot shall crush thee here,  
 No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,  
 She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,  
 And planted here the guardian shade,  
 And sent soft waters murmuring by;  
 Thus quietly thy summer goes,  
 Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,  
 I grieve to see your future doom;  
 They died—nor were those flowers more gay,  
 The flowers that did in Eden bloom;  
 Unpitying frosts and Autumn's power  
 Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

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<sup>1</sup>*Poems of Philip Freneau*, 3 vols. Ed. by F. L. Pattee, Princeton, 1902.

From morning suns and evening dews  
 At first thy little being came:  
 If nothing once, you nothing lose,  
 For when you die you are the same;  
 The space between is but an hour,  
 The frail duration of a flower.

*Estimate of Freneau.* In our enthusiasm for the good qualities of this poem and other excellent lyrics of Freneau's, especially when we recall that the English poet Campbell borrowed a line from "The Indian Burying Ground,"

"The hunter and the deer—a shade,"

and Scott enthusiastically praised "The Lament on the Patriots who Fell at Eutaw Springs," himself using a line from this poem in the third canto of *Marmion*, we are likely to overestimate the work of this early American; but Freneau must after all be ranked as a minor poet. The following paragraph from Professor Pattee's introduction to his excellent edition of Freneau's *Poems* is a judicious summary. "As to the absolute literary value of Freneau's literary remains, there is room for honest difference of opinion. He certainly is not, if we judge him from what he actually produced, a great poet. But he must in fairness be viewed against the background of his age and environment. Nature had equipped him as she has equipped few other men. He had the poet's creative imagination; he had an exquisite sense of the beautiful; and he had a realization of his own poetic endowments that kept him during a long life constantly true to the muse. Scarcely a month went by in all his life, from his early boyhood, that was not marked by poetic composition. Few poets, even in later and more auspicious days, have devoted their lives more assiduously to song."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Poems of Philip Freneau*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xcvi.

DRAMA AND FICTION

**National drama.** The drama of the Revolutionary era is mainly significant for its historical value in reflecting the spirit of the times. Thomas Godfrey's *The Prince of Parthia*, written about 1759 and published in 1765, we mentioned at the close of the colonial period as the first literary drama composed in America. It was played at Philadelphia in 1767, and was, according to Seilhamer, author of *History of the American Theater*, the first American play that was actually staged by a professional company. In the meantime, of course, many English plays had been acted much earlier; as early as 1715 some references to a theater and plays acted in Williamsburg, Virginia, have been noted; and English plays by a regular company were acted in New York as early as 1732, in Charleston, South Carolina, as early as 1734, and in Philadelphia as early as 1749.

**Plays on American subjects.** Numerous plays dealing with American subjects were written during the period of the Revolution. "Ponteach, or The Savages of America," a play appearing in 1766 and dealing in a satiric way with the white man's cruel and unjust treatment of the simple-minded Indians, has been ascribed on uncertain evidence to Robert Rogers, an English officer in the French and Indian War. Mrs. Mercy Warren (1728-1814), of Massachusetts, the sister of James Otis, wrote several plays on American subjects, the best of which is "The Group" (1775), a comedy satirizing the loyalists. Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816), of Pennsylvania, the friend and classmate of Philip Freneau and James Madison at the College of New Jersey, was the author of the best literary dramas that appeared during the period of the actual struggle for independence; they are, however, more properly dramatic poems or closet plays than acting dramas. The titles of his plays are "The

Battle of Bunker's Hill" (1776) and "The Death of General Montgomery" (1777).

**William Dunlap.** Another dramatist of some distinction was William Dunlap (1766-1839), of New York. He was a practical playwright and theater manager and our first historian of the drama, and his influence was considerable in his day. He wrote some thirty original plays, among them "The Father; or, American Shandyism" (1789), a comedy, and "André" (1798), an historical play in blank verse; he made many adaptations of foreign plays for the American stage; he was a portrait painter of distinction; and he wrote ten or more biographies and critical works.<sup>1</sup>

**Royall Tyler.** One other name should be mentioned in connection with early American drama, that of Royall Tyler (1757-1826), who was born and educated in Massachusetts, and later became chief justice of Vermont. He wrote "The Contrast," a comedy which was acted with great success in New York in 1786 and published four years later. It is based on the contrast between native American worth and the silly imitation of foreign conventions. The first typical stage Yankee, in the person of the shrewd New England farmer, Jonathan, speaking in his native dialect, appears in this play. Tyler wrote a number of other plays and farces, and also a prose narrative of adventure called *The Algerine Captive* (1797), which may be classed with our early novels.

**Joseph Dennie.** Joseph Dennie (1768-1812), whose work has been almost entirely forgotten, exerted considerable influence on the literature of his day, and in particular he deserves to be remembered as the forerunner of Irving. He was called the "American Addison," probably because he

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<sup>1</sup>In an extensive monograph by Dr. O. S. Coad, "William Dunlap, A Study of his Life and Work and of his Place in Contemporary Culture," recently published by the Dunlap Society of New York, full lists of all the works of this indefatigable painter, manager, dramatist, and critic are made available.

imitated Addison in a series of periodical essays published under the title of the *Farrago* (a medley) in several village newspapers in New England. Then he published *The Lay Preacher* (1796), a Series of Essays in *The Farmers' Museum*, at Walpole, New Hampshire, and later collected them in a volume. In 1801 Dennie became the founder and editor of a literary periodical published in Philadelphia and called *The Port Folio*. This magazine was one of the most important early literary periodicals published in America, and the longest-lived, its publication being continued until 1827. In *The Port Folio* Dennie reprinted some of his previously published essays and many new ones. He encouraged the development of polite literature and was generally looked upon as the central figure in the literary circles of Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

**Sentimental novels.** A number of tearful and highly sentimental novels, principally by a school of women writers, appeared toward the close of the eighteenth-century. Among these were Sarah Morton's *The Power of Sympathy, or The Triumph of Nature Founded in Truth* (1789); Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple, a Tale of Truth* (1790), *Trials of the Human Heart* (1795), and many other stories; and Hannah Foster's *The Coquette, or The History of Eliza Wharton, a Novel Founded on Fact* (1797). Of the many sentimental novels of the time, *Charlotte Temple*, which was the most popular in its day and which has proved the most tenacious of life, being republished in over one hundred editions up to 1905, is typical. It is the pathetic story of love and innocence, betrayal, desertion, and death from a broken heart. These highly colored and overwrought narratives, made up largely of unreal characters and unnatural situations usually said to be based on truth,

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<sup>1</sup>See Dr. H. M. Ellis's extensive monograph "Joseph Dennie and his Circle, a Study in American Literature from 1792 to 1812," *Bulletin*, 1915, No. 40, University of Texas, Austin.

and designed to move the reader to tears and at the same time teach some moral or inculcate some paramount virtue, are now solely valuable as an indication of the taste of the times and as an American example of the English sentimental school led by Samuel Richardson, the author of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. Besides these sentimental novels may be named Hugh Henry Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry, or The Adventures of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan, his Servant* (1792-93-97), a burlesque after the manner of *Don Quixote*, satirizing post-Revolutionary customs and events; and Jeremy Belknap's *The Foresters* (1792), an allegorical narrative dealing with the relations of the colonies to the English government, as the best examples of early fiction in America.

**Charles Brockden Brown: the mystery and horror school.** Before the end of the century the American novel was to find its first serious exponent in a Philadelphian, Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810). He was descended from a Quaker family, educated in the schools of Philadelphia, and prepared for the profession of law. Being strongly drawn toward literature, he deserted the law and turned to writing as a means of earning his livelihood, thus becoming one of the first men in America to adopt literature as a profession. He was never robust, and he devoted himself so steadily to study, even from his early boyhood, that his health was permanently impaired. He moved to New York for a time, and here published his first work, *The Dialogue of Alcuin* (1797), a vigorous pamphlet on the rights of woman. He was professedly writing under the influence of William Godwin, the bold English radical thinker, the author of *Political Justice*, a pamphlet, and *Caleb Williams*, a romance in which the miscarriage of justice is discussed. The influence of Godwin and other members of the early romantic school of English novelists known as the horror school, is, in fact, evident in all of Brown's work. Horace Walpole's

*The Castle of Otranto*, a Gothic Romance, Lewis's *The Monk*, and Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are the stock examples of this English horror school. Brown follows them in conjuring up mysteries and supernatural situations based on some reasonable or pseudo-scientific grounds. His first novel, *Wieland, or The Transformation* (1798), belongs distinctly to the horror school, and we may analyze it as a typical illustration of the five other novels which followed from his pen in rapid succession.

"*Wieland*." This novel, usually considered as Brown's most powerful work, is the story of a cultured family of Germans who live in Philadelphia and whose happy domestic life is interrupted by certain strange and apparently supernatural sounds. These distressing circumstances are partially compensated for by the appearance of a pleasing and polite stranger named Carwin. Wieland's father, a religious enthusiast, is said to have died from spontaneous combustion, an uncanny and really impossible form of disease in which the body becomes so violently heated from within that it is set on fire and consumed. The son inherits a superstitious trend of mind and becomes himself a religious fanatic. Hence he is well prepared by heredity and temperament to answer the strange and seductive voices heard throughout the dwelling. Wieland is called upon to sacrifice his beautiful wife and daughter, and he proceeds to these crimes on the supposition that he is answering the commands of God. After committing the double murder, Wieland is confined in a madman's cell, from which he eventually escapes and attempts to murder other members of his family. He then learns that he has been duped by the mysterious stranger Carwin, who through his powers of ventriloquism has led Wieland to murder his family. When he realizes what he has done, Wieland kills himself, and the stranger disappears. The story ends with the marriage of Wieland's sister, the narrator of the tale, to one of the minor

characters. It can be readily discerned by even a casual reader that the plot is loosely constructed and that the motivation of the action is entirely insufficient and unconvincing. But Brown's power of portraying the horrible, the supernatural, the terrible, is natural and spontaneous, and there is no lack of interest and excitement in the reading of his story.

*Brown's other tales.* Brown's *Ormond, or The Secret Witness*, appeared in 1799, and *Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the Year 1793*, in two volumes in 1799 and 1800. These stories deal with the terrible yellow fever epidemics which ravaged Philadelphia in the last decade of the century. Brown had personally experienced the horrors of the disease, being attacked by it while he was living in New York, and his descriptions are extremely powerful and realistic. Poe himself has hardly surpassed Brown in the portrayal of these hideous and repulsive scenes of disease and death, though Poe's artistic sense, of course, is superior to Brown's. *Edgar Huntly, or The Adventures of a Sleep-Walker*, published in 1801, shows Brown's descriptive powers to the best advantage, especially in the portrayal of the gloomy caves and wild natural scenes which the author had visited in his long walks about the environs of Philadelphia. In this novel Brown clearly intended, as he states in a prefatory note, to make his work distinctly American in every particular. He introduced romantic incidents from Indian life and warfare,—thus preceding Cooper in this field,—described with accurate details the exact flora and fauna of the wild American background, and gave vivid pictures of primitive customs of both the Indian and the European population of America. *Clara Howard* (1801) and *Jane Talbot* (1801) complete the list of Brown's novels. These last two are loosely constructed love stories and are distinctly inferior to the earlier romances of their author.

*Last days: general estimate of Brown.* Brown was engaged



in editorial work on magazines and annuals at Philadelphia, and during his later years he occupied himself with the compilation of geographical and historical works which he left unfinished at his death in 1810. He had long been a sufferer from consumption, and in the later years his creative powers seem to have been largely sapped by the disease. While he was not a great writer, he was our first notable novelist, a forerunner of Cooper, Poe, and Hawthorne. He deserves to be remembered also as our first purely professional author. His romances are still read to some extent by the general reader, and his work has been generously praised by his early biographers, William Dunlap and W. H. Prescott, and by the later historians of our literature. After Franklin, who must be accorded first place on account of his immortal *Autobiography*, we may place the novelist Charles Brockden Brown beside the poet Philip Freneau, as one of the two most important purely literary figures in the first two centuries of our history.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES  
SUITABLE FOR HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND  
OUTSIDE READING

**Special Reference Books for Revolutionary Literature<sup>1</sup>**

(Starred volumes are especially valuable for high-school libraries.)

For General Reference Books, see page 40.

*1. History of Literature and Selections*

\*TYLER, *Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783*; 2 vols., Putnam, N. Y., 1897.

PATTERSON, *The Spirit of the American Revolution as Revealed in the Poetry of the Period, a Study of American Patriotic Verse from 1760 to 1783*; Badger, Boston, 1915.

LOSHE, *The Early American Novel*; Lemcke & Buechner, N. Y., 1908.

\*CAIRNS, *Selections from Early American Writers, 1607-1800*. (See p. 41.)

DUYCKINCK, *Cyclopaedia of American Literature*. (See p. 41.)

\*STEDMAN and HUTCHINSON, *Library of American Literature*, Vols. III and IV.

<sup>1</sup>The important works of authors treated in the body of the text are not listed here.

- \*QUINN, *Representative American Plays*; Century, N. Y., 1917. (The first three plays are from the Colonial and Revolutionary Period.)
- \*MOSES, *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*, 3 vols., Dutton, N. Y., 1918.
- \**The American Dramatist*; Little Brown, Boston, 1911.
- SELHOMER, *History of the American Theatre*; 3 vols., Philadelphia, 1888-91.
- \*STEDMAN, *An American Anthology, 1787-1900*; Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1900.
- \*STEDMAN, *Poets of America*; Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1899.
- EGGLESTON, *American War Ballads and Lyrics*; Putnam, N. Y., 1889.
- \*STEVENSON, *Poems of American History*; Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1908.
- MATTHEWS, *Poems of American Patriotism*; Scribner's, N. Y., 1898.

### 2. Later Poetry Dealing with Revolutionary Times

- LONGFELLOW, "Paul Revere's Ride."
- BRYANT, "Song of Marion's Men" (compare Simms's song, "The Swamp Fox," in *The Partisan*).
- READ, "The Rising."
- EMERSON, "Concord Hymn," "Boston Hymn."
- WHITTIER, "Lexington," "Centennial Hymn."
- HOLMES, "Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill," "Ballad of the Boston Tea-Party," "Lexington."
- FINCH, "Nathan Hale."
- LANIER, "Psalm of the West."
- HAYNE, "Macdonald's Raid—1780."
- (See Burton E. Stevenson's *Poems of American History*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1908, for fuller lists of poems dealing with the Revolutionary Period.)

### 3. Later Fiction Dealing with Revolutionary Times

- COOPER, *The Spy, The Pilot, Lionel Lincoln, etc.*
- KENNEDY, *Horse-Shoe Robinson, a Tale of the Tory Ascendancy.*
- SIMMS, *The Partisan, a Tale of the Revolution, The Scout, Eulaw, Katherine Walton, etc.*
- COOKE, *The Virginia Comedians, Henry St. John.*
- THOMPSON, *Green Mountain Boys, The Rangers.*
- COFFIN, *The Boys of '76.*
- BUTTERWORTH, *The Patriot Schoolmaster.*
- EGGLESTON, *A Carolina Cavalier.*
- TRACKERAY, *The Virginians.*

CRADDOCK, *The Story of Old Fort Loudon.*

FORD, *Janice Meredith.*

JEWETT, *The Tory Lover.*

ATHERTON, *The Conqueror* (Alexander Hamilton).

ALLEN, *The Choir Invisible.*

CHURCHILL, *Richard Carvel.*

MITCHELL, *Hugh Wynne, The Red City.*

FREDERIC, *In the Valley.*

HENTY, *True to the Old Flag.*

STEVENSON, B. G., *A Soldier of Virginia.*

4. *Essays and Historical Works Dealing with the Revolutionary Times*

FISKE, *American Revolution*; also, for young readers, *The War of Independence.*

HART, *Formation of the Union, Camp and Fireside of the Revolution.*

EARLE, *Stage Coach and Tavern Days.*

JENKS, *When America Won Liberty.*

*American Statesmen Series* (including biographies of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Henry, Madison, etc.).

### III. ARTISTIC OR CREATIVE PERIOD

1800-1900

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

**General summary of the two preceding periods.** Glancing back over the whole course of our literature up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, we observe that the earliest American writings were produced by the Southern Colonies with Virginia as the center and Captain John Smith and Colonel William Byrd as the chief representatives of what we may term the Cavalier chroniclers; that the primacy of literary production of the theological type belongs to the New England Colonies with Boston and its environs as the chief center and the Reverend Cotton Mather and the Reverend Jonathan Edwards as the chief literary exponents of the Calvinistic theology of our Puritan forefathers. Then during the later struggle between the French and the English colonies and between the English colonies and the mother country, the Middle Colonies with Philadelphia as the chief city became the principal center of the controversial literature of the period, with orators and pamphleteers and publicists, such as Otis and Henry, Thomas Paine and John Dickinson, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson and George Washington as typical figures, and with the beginnings of a more personal and permanent type of literature in the *Autobiography* of Franklin, the nature poetry of Philip Freneau, and the novels of Charles Brockden Brown. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century we must note the shift of the center of commercial and literary activities to the growing metropolis of New York City, where Washington Irving and his associates founded what has later become known as the Knickerbocker School.

**The four divisions of the nineteenth century.** In a brief survey of the artistic and creative literature of the nineteenth century in America, we shall find that several distinct schools or movements are to be recorded, but these schools or movements have revolved pretty definitely around the Middle Atlantic States including New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, with New York City as the center; New England with Boston and its environs as the center; the more distinctly local or regional literary expression in the South, as illustrated in the distinct school at Charleston, South Carolina; and the Central and Far West coming forward in the last quarter of the century as the section in which the most uniformly democratic and purely national literary expression has taken rise. Hence we may readily and conveniently group our chief authors under four general regional divisions, and at the same time preserve the general integrity of the various schools and distinct movements and also the general chronological order—namely: (1) The New York and Middle Atlantic States Group; (2) The New England Group; (3) The Southern Group; and (4) The Central and Far Western Group. The main purpose of the following sections will be to give a rapid survey of the writers of these groups, with some analysis of the distinct movements and general influences and tendencies in each.

## I. THE NEW YORK AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC

### STATES GROUP

#### THE MAJOR WRITERS

**Classification of the writers.** Washington Irving, the genial storyteller, essayist, biographer, and historian, is the leader of the New York or Knickerbocker School. With him are grouped the three other major writers: James Fenimore Cooper, the romancer, who was born in New Jersey but lived from his infancy in New York and was intimately

associated with the history and life of his adopted state; and the two poets, William Cullen Bryant, who was born in Western Massachusetts but was for more than half a century the most prominent figure in the journalistic, literary, and cultural life of New York City, and later in the century Walt Whitman, who was born on Long Island and lived almost entirely in the Middle Atlantic States, for the most part in the neighborhood of New York, calling it "Mannahatta, my city." With these four major writers we may associate a large company of minor writers whose work, especially when compared with much of our earlier literature, is highly meritorious.

**Washington Irving.** Washington Irving (1783-1859) has been called "The Father of American Literature," just as the great statesman and soldier for whom he was named is called "The Father of His Country." In a certain sense, Irving is the father of American literature. He was not our first author to devote himself entirely to literature, for Charles Brockden Brown had done that just before him; but he was the first of our authors to gain recognition abroad, or, as Thackeray happily phrased it in his essay "Nil Nisi Bonum," "Irving was the first ambassador whom the New World of letters sent to the Old." *The Sketch Book* was, in fact, the first positive answer to the tantalizing British query, "Who reads an American book?"

*His early life and education.* Irving was born in New York City, April 3, 1783, the year which marked the treaty of peace and the close of the Revolution, and his mother, who was an ardent patriot, decided to name him for the great American general, for, she said, "Washington's work is ended, and the child shall be named for him." When Irving was six years old, his old Scotch nurse presented him to President Washington for his blessing. Irving remembered the incident, remarking in later years, "That blessing has attended me through life." It is interesting, finally,

to note in this connection that Irving's last great work was the five-volume *Life of Washington*, which appeared in 1859



From an engraving by E. Burney, after a photograph  
WASHINGTON IRVING

just before his death. Irving's parents were both born abroad, his father being of Scotch and his mother of English descent. There were born to them eleven children, of whom Washington was the youngest. He was a delicate and wayward sort of child, and hence his education was not very thorough or systematic. He read tales of travel and adventure, particularly *The Arabian Nights* and *Robinson Crusoe*, when he ought to have been studying his arithmetic;

and it is said that he would willingly write the other boys' compositions if they would work his sums for him. He dropped out of school at sixteen, failing to take advantage of the opportunity of attending Columbia College as two of his brothers did. Instead, he spent his time in reading tales of romance, slipping away from home before and after family prayers to attend the newly opened theater, and roaming the country roundabout, listening to the good wives' tales about ghosts and fairies in the surrounding hills and valleys. He made several long holiday excursions into the Hudson River hill country farther north, going on one trip as far north as Canada, ever collecting those legends and nature pictures which he has so well preserved in "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

*Irving's love affair.* The plan for young Irving's future was that he should become a lawyer. The chief result of his five years of desultory study of law, largely in Judge Hoffman's office, was his acquaintance with the Judge's daughter, Matilda. She was a beautiful and quick-witted girl, and Irving fell desperately in love with her. She was equally attracted to the handsome and genial youth and promised to marry him, but developed quick consumption and died in her eighteenth year. Irving's devotion to her memory is one of the most beautiful things in his life. He did not seclude himself from society or become sentimentally morbid; indeed, he was always delighted with the society of women, and the evidence seems to show that he had some serious intentions of marrying later in life. But the fact remains that he never married, and after his death there were found among his cherished personal belongings a lock of Miss Hoffman's hair and her Bible and prayerbook.

*His first trip abroad: early literary undertakings.* Irving's constitution was still frail, and so in 1804 it was decided that he should visit Europe partly in search of health, but partly also for literary and cultural advantages. He traveled



through Italy, France, and England, meeting many distinguished persons and making many friends by his genial manners and attractive personality. On his return in 1806, he was admitted to the bar, but he devoted his time more to social engagements and literary experiments than to his profession. Before his trip abroad he had contributed to a New York paper a series of light satiric letters, signing them "Jonathan Oldstyle," a name indicating at this early period his fondness for the eighteenth-century Addisonian prose. With James Kirke Paulding<sup>1</sup> he now undertook another experiment, a semi-monthly periodical called *Salmagundi*. It was modeled on the *Spectator* of Addison and Steele, and though it did not run quite a year, it gave both of these men an outlet for their literary aspirations and eventually led to other undertakings in authorship.

*His works classified.* Irving's works may be divided into three classes: his humorous and serious essays and sketches, his longer connected narratives, and his biographical and historical narratives. The first of these is the most important and will receive the major part of our attention.

"*Knickerbocker's History.*" In 1809 there appeared the first really important work by Irving, namely, *A History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker*. It was begun as a satiric burlesque on Dr. Samuel Mitchell's *Picture of New York*, but it was carried out in such a fine spirit of humorous extravaganza that it was at once recognized as an original and imaginative work. It was preceded by a clever series of advertising notes in the form of news items about the peculiar and distressing disappearance of Diedrich Knickerbocker, "a small, elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and a cocked hat." He had left behind him a curious manuscript,

<sup>1</sup>Aside from his association with Irving in the *Salmagundi* papers, James Kirke Paulding (1778-1860) is now chiefly remembered for his novel, *The Dutchman's Fireside* (1831), which portrays with considerable charm and accuracy the quaint Dutch customs and beautiful Hudson river scenery which Irving had some years before made famous in his *Knickerbocker's History and Sketch Book*.

which would be sold to pay his board bill. Naturally, when this manuscript was published everybody wanted to read it, and everybody, with the exception of a few serious-minded Dutch historians, was delighted with the good-natured and playful satire, the mock-serious exaggeration, and the quaint Dutch reminiscences which the book contained. It was talked of and bandied about so freely that it gave a new word to the language, Knickerbocker, the generic name for the Dutch freeholders, a term later applied to the first school of nineteenth century American writers. It is a difficult thing for a purely humorous work to hold its place of popularity, and so we find today comparatively few readers of *Knickerbocker's History*. A little of it is still highly amusing, but style in writing, as in dress, changes from generation to generation, and the broad splashes of humor and elephantine facetiousness of the celebrated *Knickerbocker's History* are not so attractive to modern readers as they were to Irving's contemporaries.

*Irving's social activities.* After *Knickerbocker's History* Irving seems to have rested on his laurels for a period of ten years. He was nominally engaged in business with his brothers, but his duties seem to have been mainly to keep up the social side of the house. He was sent to Washington, ostensibly to protect the claims of certain business interests before Congress, but his letters relate more of his experiences in the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Dolly Madison and others than of his business activities. He also visited Baltimore and Philadelphia, where he was received in the best society. His literary success had paved the way for him everywhere, and he was already something of a social lion. So ran the merry years away; and some serious ones, too, for Irving passed through the War of 1812, not in active service, it is true, but as a military aid to Governor Tompkins of New York.

*Irving's second visit to Europe: "The Sketch Book."* In 1815 he went to England to visit one of his brothers,

intending to stay only a short time, but it was 1832 before he set foot on American soil again. He became the familiar



JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS RIP VAN WINKLE

friend of many notable persons in England and on the continent, among them Sir Walter Scott, whom he visited at

Abbotsford. Then the business affairs of the family had become involved, and Irving turned to literature for support. In 1819 he sent his manuscript sketches back to New York and had them published serially in nine numbers as *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*. Sir Walter Scott interested himself in Irving's behalf and finally succeeded in getting the famous English publishing house of Murray to bring out a standard edition in England during the next year. The book was a great success—the first American book, in fact, that had been widely read in England. Some of the sketches now appeal to us as over-sentimental and even mawkish, but the fine quality of the style, the rich humor, and the emotional fitness of most of the selections make *The Sketch Book* a classic in our literature. Four of the papers have been singled out as masterpieces of their kind—"Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," two tales supposed to be the posthumous work of Diedrich Knickerbocker, and two pleasingly romantic essays, "Westminster Abbey" and "Stratford-on-Avon."

*Other books in the "Sketch Book" vein.* Other books of sketches and stories are *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), *Tales of a Traveler* (1824), *The Alhambra* (1832), and *Wolfert's Roost* (1855). Each of these contains some excellent work, but no one of them quite equals *The Sketch Book* in power and popularity. *Bracebridge Hall* contains the quaintly humorous sketch of "The Stout Gentleman" and the Knickerbocker story of "Dolph Heileger." In the *Tales of a Traveler* are a number of stories of adventure that will delight young readers, such as "Kidd the Pirate" and "The Devil and Tom Walker" found in the fourth division under the general title of "The Money-Diggers." *The Alhambra*, called by Prescott "that delightful Spanish Sketch Book," is, next to the original volume, the best of all the series of short sketches and stories. It is a book filled with beautiful descriptions, strange legends, and romantic tales. Irving

was deeply impressed with the beauty of the old Moorish palace, and he has succeeded remarkably well in investing this wonderful building with a glamour of mystical romance and rich legendary lore. These essays, sketches, and tales, then, are the productions upon which Irving's literary fame chiefly rests. In this connection we may quote a significant passage from a letter written by Irving in 1824 when some of his friends were urging him to write a novel.

For my part, I consider a story merely as a frame on which to stretch my materials. It is the play of thought and sentiment and language; the weaving in of characters, lightly, yet expressively, delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half-concealed vein of humor that is often playing through the whole — these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed. I have preferred adopting the mode of sketches and short tales rather than long works, because I choose to take a line of writing peculiar to myself, rather than fall into the manner and school of any other writer.

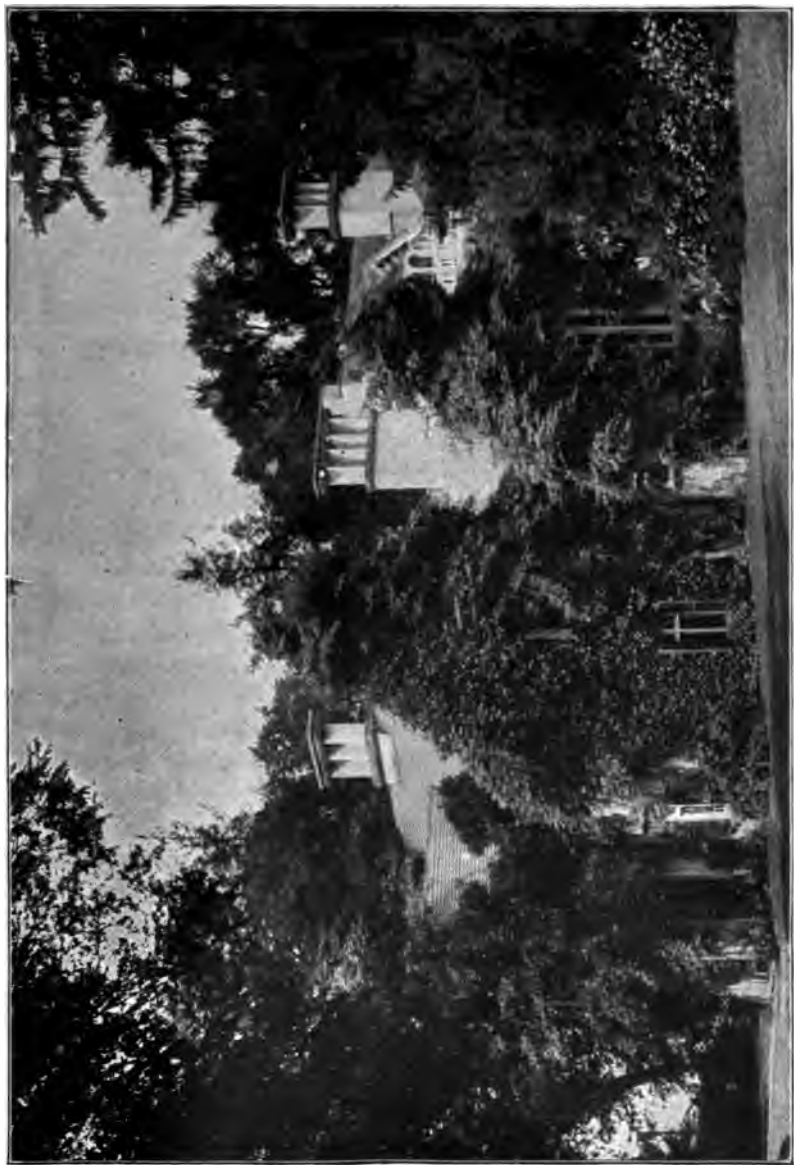
*Irving's longer narratives.* We may dismiss the second class with but a brief mention of titles: *A Tour of the Prairies* (1835), *Astoria* (1836), and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837). These, though American in setting and coloring, being the results of Irving's tour in what was then the wild western frontier, just across the Mississippi, are the least valuable of all Irving's works. They were written largely to satisfy the popular demand for more work from Irving's pen. Their chief interest now lies in their illuminating record of the early frontier life.

*Biographical and historical works.* The third class of Irving's writings really begins with his second distinct literary impulse — namely, that received from his sojourn in Spain. Here we find the ambitious biographies and historical narratives taking shape. In 1826 Irving was invited to Spain to undertake a translation of a new work, *The Voyages of Columbus*. When he reached Madrid, he found that

this new book was not suited for translation; but nothing daunted, he began with prodigious energy to collect material for an original *Life of Columbus*. He found a great mass of documents ready to his hand, and in 1828 Murray published the three-volume *Life of Columbus*. This was the first of Irving's Spanish studies, and also his first effort in biographical narrative. Then followed a number of other books dealing with Spanish history, among them *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), *Legend of the Conquest of Spain* (1835), and *Mahomet and His Successors* (1850). *The Alhambra* has already been mentioned.

Irving's "*Life of Goldsmith*." It was while he was in Spain also that Irving conceived the plan of writing his biographical masterpiece, *The Life of Washington* (1859), but it was not until after his second residence in Spain and his final return to America that he carried out this design. The one other biographical work which must not be omitted is *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1849), published also after his final return to America. This is the most popular of all his biographies because it is briefer and probably more sympathetic in its treatment than either of the other two more extended studies. In fact, Goldsmith and Irving are similar in many respects. Each was good-natured and genial, each was more or less improvident and impecunious,—though Irving succeeded in accumulating a competence toward the end of his life,—each remained unmarried through life, and each possessed a peculiarly harmonious and charming prose style. Moreover, the subject-matter of a good deal of their work is quite similar. Finally, each of them has been called the best-beloved author in his country. But as Professor William P. Trent points out, Irving is not an imitator merely, but an original writer. "He is not an American Goldsmith; he is an Anglo-Saxon Irving."

"*Sunnyside*," Irving's home. Upon Irving's return to America in 1832 he thought he would settle down for a quiet



SUNNYSIDE, WASHINGTON IRVING'S HOME ON THE HUDSON

and peaceful literary life. He bought an attractive estate on the Hudson and named it "Sunnyside," and here he made himself comfortable. His American publishers brought out a complete edition of his works, a venture which was undertaken with some hesitation, but which proved eminently successful, Irving himself receiving \$88,000 in royalties before his death.

*Last visit to Europe: "Life of Washington."* In 1842 he was appointed minister to Spain, an honor which he had abundantly earned, but one which he accepted somewhat unwillingly because it took him away from his home. He gladly relinquished his post in 1846 and came back to America to complete his last literary work, *The Life of Washington*. He was fêted and sought after and honored in many ways by his admirers. But he was growing tired of it all, and his only hope now was that he might "go down with all sail set." He died at "Sunnyside," November 28, 1859, full of years and rich in love and honors. His tomb overlooks Sleepy Hollow and the majestic river which he loved and over which he has thrown the glamour of romance and literary legend.<sup>1</sup>

**James Fenimore Cooper.** Almost since his very first appearance as an author James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) has been called "The American Scott," but as Lowell long ago intimated, the comparison is much to the American author's disadvantage. It is true that Scott was the inspiration of some of the best of Cooper's creative work, and it is also true that there is a certain similarity between these authors in their love of outdoor life, adventure, and exciting action; in largeness and sweep rather than delicacy and finish of style; and in the final effects of their romances on the imagination of their readers. But in his power of

<sup>1</sup> The standard life of Irving is that by Pierre Irving in three volumes. The biographies by Charles Dudley Warner and H. W. Boynton in the American Men of Letters and the Riverside Biographical Series respectively are excellent shorter studies.





JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

reproducing past ages of history, in his wonderful array of original character creations, and in the structural completeness and final artistic charm of his romances, Scott far and away surpasses his American follower.

*General critical estimate.* Cooper is undoubtedly the most uneven of our greater writers. He has done some things wonderfully well, but he has also produced some books of exceedingly little worth. Along with his excellences he displays so many conspicuous faults as a stylist that there are some modern critics who feel inclined even to deny him a place among the major writers of America. It is true that his grammar is not always correct, that his diction is sometimes turgid and bombastic, and that there are many evidences of weakness in the general structural elements of his stories. It is also true that there is a lack of consistency, probability, and realism in his plots; and no one will deny that most of his characters, particularly his faultless "females," are more wooden and artificial than real flesh-and-blood men and women. However, when we consider the richness of Cooper's invention, the beauty, sweep, and power of his natural backgrounds, the energy displayed in his few great character creations, the originality and intense Americanism of his major conceptions, and the interest-gripping power of his most successful tales, we must inevitably accept him not only as one of our pioneer writers but as one of our largest creative geniuses.

*Cooper's early life and education.* The eleventh of the twelve children of William Cooper and Elizabeth Fenimore was born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789, and christened James. After he had reached maturity, by an act of the New York legislature he assumed his mother's maiden name and has ever since been known as James Fenimore Cooper. Judge William Cooper owned a large estate on the shores of Otsego Lake in central New York, and when James was about a year old, Judge Cooper moved

into a home which he had built in the forests of his estate and named it "The Hall." Here, at what has since become Cooperstown, the boy grew up and became familiarly acquainted with those wild, free scenes of the primeval wilderness which he was later to people with its aboriginal inhabitants, the creations of his own imagination, it is true, but based on actual observation of Indian and pioneer life as it was impressed on his childhood's memory. There was but little opportunity for formal education in this undeveloped territory, and so Judge Cooper sent his children to the more thickly populated settlements for their schooling. James was sent to Albany for a year to be tutored for college. With a very inadequate preparation he entered Yale at the early age of thirteen. He apparently paid little attention to his academic duties, and in his third year he was dismissed from the college. It is unfortunate that Cooper did not complete his education, for his style might have been greatly chastened and refined if he had submitted to the discipline of a careful literary training in his youth. Even after he left college he might have improved his style by practice and self-criticism if he had begun early enough; but he was past thirty when he began to write, and so he was never able to overcome fully the handicap of his youthful neglect of educational opportunities.

*His experiences in the navy.* Judge Cooper, now a congressman, looked upon the navy as offering a promising career and certainly a good disciplinary training for his independent, self-willed, and adventurous son. Accordingly, at the time of the boy's dismissal from Yale, he secured a post for him on a merchantman and sent him to sea. This was the method of preliminary training for officers of the navy in the days before the founding of the naval academy at Annapolis. For nearly a year the young sailor stood the tests before the mast, traveling through the Straits of Gibraltar to Spain, returning by way of London,

and crossing the Atlantic with all the experiences of storms, hardships, and excitements of those early days of pirates and freebooters. He then became a midshipman in the United States Navy, and for three years passed his life on board various ships, mostly on the Great Lakes, but also crossing the Atlantic in a visit to foreign ports. Of these early sea experiences we learn more from Cooper's sea tales than from any authentic records of his life during this period.

*Cooper an accidental author.* In 1810 Cooper secured a year's leave of absence from the navy with the privilege of retiring permanently if he so desired. In 1811, having in the meantime married Miss Susan De Lancey, he resigned his commission, and for the next ten years lived the life of a farmer, or country gentleman, on his father's and his father-in-law's estates. It was about 1820 that the interesting episode occurred which turned Cooper's life into literary channels. While reading a novel of English society life to his wife, he suddenly threw down the book in disgust, exclaiming that he could write a better novel himself. His wife challenged him to make good his boast, and under her encouragement Cooper produced within a short time a two volume novel, *Precaution*, a book which was a failure in everything except that it showed Cooper he really had a gift for writing. He knew little or nothing of English society, and so, as might have been foreseen, he did not succeed in portraying it. But when his friends encouraged him to try again, he turned in his next venture to an American subject and American scenery, and produced *The Spy*, the first widely successful American novel.

*Classification of his novels.* Cooper's stories may be conveniently treated in three classes: (1) his historical tales, best represented by *The Spy*; (2) his Sea Tales, best represented by *The Pilot*; and (3) the stories of Indian and pioneer life in the colonial days, best represented by the Leatherstocking Tales.

"*The Spy*." It was in 1821 that, with some hesitancy and at his own financial risk, Cooper published his first important novel, *The Spy*. It is a tale of the Revolution, based upon the romantic exploits of the spy, Harvey Birch, a secret agent in the confidence of Washington, but a man thoroughly hated and distrusted by the American patriots because he was in all outward appearances a British partisan. His marvelous adventures in the war, his intrepid and sometimes reckless unconcern for his own safety, his astuteness and agility in extricating himself from perilous situations and all kinds of difficulties, his mysterious mission, his charmed life, and his unswerving patriotism and loyalty to the American cause make Harvey Birch one of the prime favorites in the gallery of American fictitious characters. So realistically are his adventures described that several persons have claimed to be the original from which the character was drawn, and not a few readers, even to this day, are convinced that Harvey Birch is a historical character. *The Spy* was not only widely read in America and England, but it was almost immediately translated into every important foreign language and read with delight by practically every court and capital of the world. Just as Lord Byron by his poetical romances is said to have carried English literature upon a pilgrimage over Europe, so Cooper may be said to have been the first American who led American fiction on a pilgrimage throughout all Europe. Irving's *Sketch Book* had blazed the way, more particularly in England. but Cooper extended the path to every civilized country of Europe. Had Cooper written nothing else, *The Spy* alone is enough to give him a place in the roll of American novelists. Its popularity has never waned, and it is perhaps true that this thrilling romance has as many readers today as it had during its first years of popular favor.

*Cooper's Sea Tales*. The next book which Cooper published was *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of the famous

Leatherstocking Tales. But before taking up these, we shall consider another group of stories introduced by *The Pilot*, written in this same year but not published until so late in December that it is usually dated 1824. This was not only the first significant American sea tale, but in reality the first distinctively successful sea story in English literature. Smollett, the eighteenth-century British novelist, had first shown in *Roderick Random* the possibilities of the sea as a new realm for romancers to conquer, but he had attracted few or no adventurers to follow him. Sir Walter Scott had just published *The Pirate*, a tale in which the sea naturally becomes prominent. On reading Scott's novel, which had been published anonymously, Cooper insisted that it was written by a landsman who knew very little about the sea from personal contact. His own experience in early life gave him peculiar advantages for the task which he now set himself,—namely, the writing of a book which should deal entirely with the ocean and present real sailors and realistic events lighted up with a touch of romance, so as to make the story a convincing presentation of life on the sea. *The Pilot* is based on the cruise of John Paul Jones, though nowhere in the story is the great Revolutionary sailor's name mentioned. It was a notable thing to introduce into a sea-tale such historical material, but still more notable was the creation of Long Tom Coffin, the rough, uncouth, superstitious, but faithful, honest, and loyal old tar. He stands with Harvey Birch, Natty Bumppo, and Chingachgook as one of the four greatest characters produced by Cooper's imagination. Cooper followed this first success in the romance of the sea by nine other sea tales, but it is perhaps unnecessary to recommend to young readers any of these except *The Red Rover* (1828) and *The Two Admirals* (1842).

*Cooper's success.* The publication of the three great novels, *The Spy*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Pilot*, between 1821

and 1824 had given Cooper's name to the world, but it was in 1826 that he reached the very acme of his fame by the publication of the second and the best of the Leatherstocking Tales, *The Last of the Mohicans*. It has been confidently asserted that no American before or since has reached the world-wide popularity which he enjoyed at this time. Since 1822 he had been living in New York City to obtain educational advantages for his daughters and to be at the literary center of the country. He founded a club and was its acknowledged leader for several years. In fact, he was now something of a literary lion, and he felt distinctly the importance of his position as the most popular writer of his day. The poet Bryant in reporting a dinner to his wife wrote that Cooper "engrossed the whole conversation, and seems a little giddy with the great success his works have met with."

"*The Last of the Mohicans*." The scene of *The Last of the Mohicans* is the well-known wilderness of central New York where Cooper had spent his childhood. The conflict between the French and the English for the supremacy in America forms the historical background, and the vast forests and rivers and lakes the natural setting of the series of thrilling episodes which constitute the plot. Natty Bumppo, the famous scout, previously introduced as Leatherstocking in *The Pioneers*, is here presented in the prime of life and called Hawk-eye after the Indian manner of designation. His friend Chingachgook, the stolid old Mohican chieftain, and the lithe and athletic Uncas, sorrowfully called by Chingachgook "the last of the Mohicans," and Magua, the treacherous Indian runner, a member of the Mohawk tribe and an enemy of the Mohicans, are among the chief character creations worthy of remembrance in this stirring romance of pioneer days in the American colonies.

*The Leatherstocking Tales*. The best sequence in which to read the five Leatherstocking Tales now is not in the order in which they were written but that in which the life of Natty

Bumppo is presented chronologically in a sort of "drama in five acts." *The Deerslayer* (1841) shows the scout just merging into manhood; *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and *The Pathfinder* (1840) show him in the full vigor of middle life; *The Pioneers* (1823) presents him as already an old man, and in *The Prairie* (1827) his career terminates when he answers "Here!" to the last summons.<sup>1</sup> Thus this heroic figure, the one great epic character in our literature, is fully drawn in these five romances. By common consent the series is now looked upon as America's greatest prose epic. Natty Bumppo, no matter by which of his four or five pseudonyms you call him, is undoubtedly one of the world's chief fictitious characters. It is perhaps less as a great personality than as the representative of a vanished era in American history that he is valued. No matter how idealized the characters in these books may be, no matter how improbable the romantic adventures described, no matter how inaccurate and inconsistent in minor details of plot and style, the Leatherstocking Tales form the truest epic of our early colonial life that the world possesses, and this great imaginative creation will surely hold its place in public regard long after all else that Cooper wrote is forgotten.

*Decline of Cooper's personal popularity.* In 1826 Cooper, in the full flush of his popularity, went abroad with his family and remained for seven years, traveling in several of the European countries. During these years he began to write himself *down* almost as speedily as he had written himself *up* in the public regard. It is true that some of his great books were yet to be given to the world, but in the assumed rôle of defender of democratic institutions at all hazards, he soon won a number of enemies in aristocratic Europe; and on his return to America, having now been abroad long enough to recognize the shortcomings of his countrymen, he under-

<sup>1</sup>A good device for remembering the titles in chronological order is to note that they come in alphabetic order: *D-*, *L-*, *Pa-*, *Pi-*, *Pr-*.



took the thankless task of reforming the nation by openly quarreling with it and castigating its follies. The result was that he became as severely hated as he had been previously extravagantly praised. He was mercilessly attacked in the press, and he promptly retorted by suing for libel every paper in which he had been lampooned. He had a dozen or more of these suits during this period, and almost invariably he conducted his own cases and won favorable verdicts. This soon brought his detractors to their senses, and he was thereafter less violently assailed in the public prints, but no less violently condemned in private. There is no doubt now, after the lapse of many years, that Cooper was at heart a loyal and devoted patriot, kind and tender in his family and personal relations, unswerving in his honesty, but unrelenting in his prosecution of what appeared to him as ignorance and injustice. He was lacking in tact, grace, and diplomacy in dealing with individuals and the public, and hence he was an adept in what has been called by Whistler "the gentle art of making enemies."

*Cooper's decline in creative power.* Naturally these contests embittered Cooper's later years and prevented him from advancing steadily in his creative work. He wrote some books that are still valued both as literary productions and as historical documents. His *History of the United States Navy* (1839), for example, was condemned as a partisan document at the time, but it is now recognized as one of the important contributions to the history of our navy. For the most part, however, Cooper gave over his talents to the writing of severe criticisms and purpose novels, first espousing one cause and then another. His reputation brought him many readers for each new book, but the public soon learned to discredit these later productions, and today everybody realizes that it would have been much better for Cooper's fame if he had left unwritten at least two-thirds of the thirty-two separate novels which he published.

*His service to our literature commemorated.* Cooper finally retired from New York City and made his permanent home at "The Hall" on Otsego Lake near Cooperstown. Here he died, September 14, 1851, having rounded out to the day his sixty-second year. A short time after the news of his death came, a few of his admirers and friends in New York City, realizing his great service to American letters, held a memorial service at which Daniel Webster and William Cullen Bryant delivered orations. At Cooperstown a majestic monument was later erected to his memory. It consists of a huge boulder of rough granite surmounted by the romantic figure of an Indian hunter in the attitude of the chase, bearing a bow in one hand and holding in his dog with the other. So after the "fretful stir unprofitable" of his later years, Cooper's body rests peacefully now in the midst of the country over which he threw the wonderful spirit of Indian romance. He was in many ways an admirable man, and his service to our literature cannot easily be over-estimated.<sup>1</sup>

**William Cullen Bryant.** William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) has been called "The American Wordsworth," because he was most profoundly influenced by the teachings of that great English poet in making nature the most prominent object of his reflective musings. He is undoubtedly America's greatest nature poet, just as Wordsworth is England's. He interpreted nature as he saw and knew it as a New England country boy; and while the application of his best poetry is universal, it was the American flowers, birds, and scenery that he painted, and the American point of view is everywhere evident. Bryant has also been called the first distinctively great American poet, the poet who first produced work recognized in England as in any way comparable to that of the nineteenth-century English poets who

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<sup>1</sup> The standard life of Cooper is that by Professor T. R. Lounsbury in the American Men of Letters Series of biographies.

were his contemporaries. The fact that the greatest of the English critics, Matthew Arnold, said that Bryant was



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

*facile princeps* among American poets and expressed his approval of Hartley Coleridge's judgment that "To a

Waterfowl" was the best short poem in the English language, is proof enough that Bryant was at that early time recognized as in the same class with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. We do not mean to say that Bryant is in any sense as great a poet as either of the first two of these, but he certainly ranks above the minor poets, where Southey must be classed.

*His precocity.* Bryant was born November 3, 1794, in Cummington, a town in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. His father, Dr. Peter Bryant, was a descendant of good Puritan stock from the days of the first settlement at Plymouth; and his mother, Sarah Snell, was likewise descended from a famous Puritan family, that of John and Priscilla Alden, whom Longfellow has immortalized in "The Courtship of Miles Standish." Dr. Bryant was a cultured man and an ardent Federalist, and he took pains to educate his children in both literary and political lines after his own ideals. William Cullen was a remarkably precocious child. It is authoritatively stated that he learned his alphabet at sixteen months, wrote poetry at nine years, translated Latin verses at ten, composed political satires at thirteen, and wrote the first draft of "Thanatopsis," which has since been recognized as an American if not a world masterpiece, before he was seventeen. It must be remembered in contemplating this last marvelous performance, however, that "Thanatopsis" had frequent revisions before it reached its present final form, and that the finest portions of the poem were added when Bryant had reached his twenty-seventh year. When he was five years old, the boy was sent to live with his grandfather Snell in order that he might attend school. The poet himself tells us that he was "almost an infallible speller," and one of the fleetest runners in school. His precocity made it seem profitable to give him a college education, and so he was sent to his maternal uncle to begin the study of Latin, and

then to the Reverend Moses Hallock's preparatory school at Plainfield to begin Greek. He soon mastered both these ancient languages. His conquest of the difficult Greek was wonderfully rapid, for he tells us that within two months from the time he began with the Greek alphabet he had read through the New Testament in the original and was almost as familiar with it as with the English translation. Usually such precocity indicates early maturity and rapid decline of powers, but when we remember that Bryant retained his powers through a long and active journalistic life, and at the age of eighty was still producing excellent poetry, we are all the more astounded at this recital of his early development.

*His young manhood and marriage.* At sixteen Bryant entered Williams College and remained one year. He was disappointed in the educational advantages offered at Williams College, and with his father's consent he planned to transfer to Yale College the next year. When the time came for him to leave for Yale, however, his father's straitened finances would not permit of further college training, and Bryant reluctantly gave up his cherished ambition and turned to the study of law. He read law in two private offices, and was admitted to the bar in 1815. For nine years he practiced his profession diligently but not enthusiastically, beginning at Plainfield where he had once attended school, but shortly afterwards removing to Great Barrington, a more promising town near by. Here he met and married Miss Frances Fairchild, and she proved to be what he called the good angel of his life. During this period he addressed several poems to her, but preserved only one of them in his printed volumes—"Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids," which Poe called "the truest poem written by Bryant." Later poems touch upon his beautiful attachment for her, such as "The Life That Is," which celebrates her recovery from an illness, and "October, 1866," which mourns her death.

*Bryant as an editor.* It was in 1825 that Bryant finally gave up the practice of law, which had always been distasteful to him, and turned to journalism as a career. He was appointed to be editor of a monthly literary periodical called *The New York Review*. After a short and checkered career this journal was merged with others, and Bryant became assistant editor of *The New York Evening Post*. Within a short time the editor-in-chief died, and Bryant was promoted to this position. He made *The Evening Post* the best edited newspaper in New York, and he soon attained a controlling financial interest in this great daily, so that he was from this time on a comparatively wealthy man. In his youth, under the tuition and inspiration of his father, who was a stanch Federalist, Bryant had written and published "The Embargo," a severe satire on the Democratic president, Thomas Jefferson. It seems like the irony of fate that he should become in later life the editor of a paper that at one time supported the Democratic party. In his new position he was an influential spokesman for high political and moral ideals, and he became quite distinguished, not as an impassioned orator, but as a maker of elevated and finished addresses on many historic and literary occasions.

*His visits to Europe.* Bryant traveled much during his later years, making no fewer than seven visits abroad. While he was not received with the éclat that greeted some of our later literary men in their visits to Europe, he was everywhere recognized as a man of distinction, and he had the unfailing good taste not to parade his own social success or to betray the hospitality of his entertainers by writing about them in his letters. He contributed travel letters to his paper during these trips, and afterwards collected the best of these in a volume called *Letters of a Traveler*.

*Bryant's best poems.* Bryant's career as a recognized poet began as early as 1817 with his father's presentation of

"Thanatopsis" and "A Fragment" (later called "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood") to the editors of *The North American Review*. The story of the amazement of these men at the character of the verse,—no such poetry having hitherto been produced on this side of the Atlantic,—has been frequently told. The genesis of "To a Waterfowl," written after Bryant observed a lone mallard flying to its rest just at sunset, is also well known. In "Thanatopsis" and "To a Waterfowl" Bryant undoubtedly reached his highest altitude as a poet. The first is a moralizing blank verse poem on the theme of death and is developed with a rich nature setting; the second is a nature lyric based on the solemn religious thought that the providence of God directs every human life. Death and nature were the two themes that most frequently attracted the poet's muse, and we may safely affirm that no other American poet has equaled him in his treatment of these solemn and inspiring subjects. Though Bryant never surpassed these early efforts, some critics hold that he sustained the reputation made in his early years, even when he became an octogenarian. In 1821 he published his first thin volume of poems, and in 1832 a second and enlarged edition appeared, the most notable of the additional poems being "A Forest Hymn," "To the Fringed Gentian," "Song of Marion's Men," and "Death of the Flowers." The last named poem opens with the familiar lines,

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere;

and closes with a beautiful tribute to his beloved sister, who had died in the autumn. Other editions of the poems appeared from time to time, and by 1864 Bryant had garnered a considerable volume of poems, though he was not so prolific as most of our major poets. "The Prairies," a poem full of the breadth and sweep of our western plains;

"The Battlefield," in which occurs the most frequently quoted passage in all his poetry,

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
Th' eternal years of God are hers;  
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies among his worshipers;

"Oh Mother of a Mighty Race," a patriotic tribute to America; "Robert of Lincoln," an imitative bird song entirely different in tone from anything else Bryant wrote; "Sella" and "The Little People of the Snow," two fairy pieces; and "The Flood of Years," a reversion to the theme and manner of "Thanatopsis" when the poet was eighty-two,—these are perhaps the best of his later productions.

*Bryant's translations of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey."* As a relief from his grief over the death of his wife in 1866, Bryant turned to the translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He had previously translated some portions of the fifth book of the *Odyssey*, but he now set seriously about converting the whole of the two great Homeric epics into blank verse. This remarkable achievement, begun when he was seventy-two and completed when he was seventy-seven, may be placed with Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* and Bayard Taylor's of Goethe's *Faust* as one of the three greatest translations produced in America, works which rank high among the best of this kind in all English literature.

*His death and burial.* Bryant died on June 12, 1878. During the last years of his life he was many times called the first citizen of the republic. His life was pure and noble, and he well deserved the encomiums that were spoken and written of him all over the country. He was undoubtedly a great and good man. Nature, whom he loved so well and interpreted so beautifully, had made him one of her own noblemen. He was buried at Roslyn, Long Island, where he owned an estate and where his wife was buried twelve



years before. An excellent statue ensconced in a tasteful classic arch has been erected to the poet's memory in the New York Public Library.

*General critical estimate of Bryant.* It has been customary, since Lowell's criticism of Bryant in "A Fable for Critics," to speak of Bryant's coldness and lack of passion. It is undoubtedly true that there is a lack of enthusiastic passion or demonstrative sentiment in his poetry, but it would be more accurate to call his style restrained and classic than stiff and frigid. Bryant was a man of deep feeling, but he was naturally reserved in disposition, and he controlled his feelings with that perfect poise, self-restraint, and repose which is characteristic of the classic poets at their best. He was a devoted son, husband, and father, a loyal friend, and a patriotic citizen. There is certainly a note of tender delicacy, genuine warmth, and deep spirituality in much of his poetry. Among some modern critics, too, there is a tendency to belittle Bryant's poetical genius because of the evident didacticism, the serious ethical purpose, and the melancholy note in much of his verse. It is very true that these elements exist in his poetry, and perhaps to the modern artistic temperament there is a too patent moral note and a too constant melancholy or sober tone in his best poems. But this was the natural tendency of his genius; and even if the range of his muse was not wide, he has certainly expressed himself well in his chosen domain. None of our poets has better expressed the fundamental seriousness and the sober delight in noble ethical ideals of the Anglo-Saxon race, and we may safely predict that the best of Bryant's poetry, as represented in "Thanatopsis" and "To a Water-fowl," will be read long after much that is now held in high esteem by his detractors shall have passed into oblivion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The standard life of Bryant is that by his son-in-law, Parke Godwin. Two more recent and somewhat briefer studies are those by John Bigelow in the *American Men of Letters Series* and W. A. Bradley in the *English Men of Letters Series*.

**Walt Whitman.** Walt Whitman (1819-1892), "The Good Gray Poet," was during his lifetime a literary storm center, and even yet his name cannot be mentioned in any circle of readers without bringing forth both a paean of praise and a chorus of condemnation. Some one has called him the best loved and the best hated of all our writers. He had a desperately hard struggle to gain a hearing, but he persisted with a supreme and undisturbed patience and self-confidence, and triumphed in the end. As time goes on, his figure looms larger and larger on the literary horizon, so that there are many who now recognize in this so-called sensual, self-vaunting, unlettered hoodlum of Manhattan, the one universally great literary genius produced by American democracy.

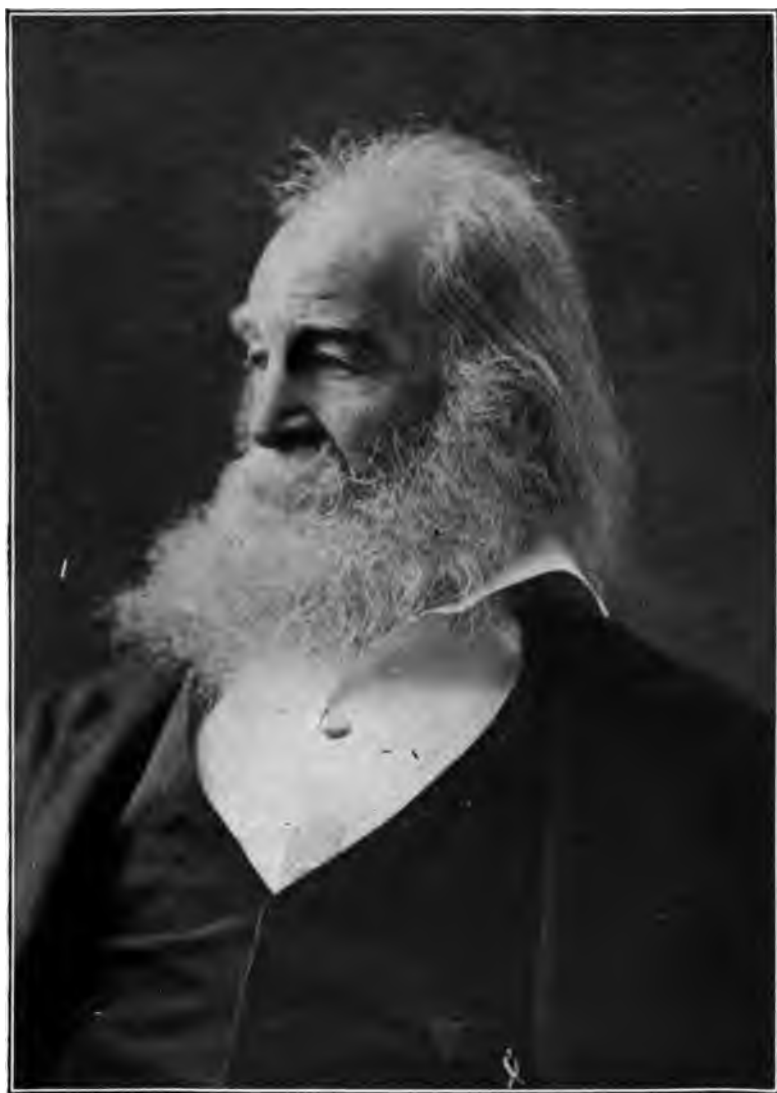
*Whitman's early life.* Whitman was born May 31, 1819, at the old family homestead, West Hills, near Huntington, Long Island. His ancestors were of the simple, unlettered farming and seafaring classes, and made little pretension to material prosperity or social standing. Whitman was always unfeignedly proud of his humble origin, for he knew that he came from a plain, strong, virile, healthy, American stock, and thus, as a true son of the soil, he might claim to be the appointed poet of democracy.

Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,  
Well-begotten, and raised by a perfect mother,

he says; and again,

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, **this air,**  
Born here of parents born here, from parents the same, **and their**  
parents the same.

In this old home on Long Island, or Paumanok, as he loved to call it, the child lived until he was four years old, absorbing even at this age the rural sights and sounds, the vigor and freshness of the salt sea air, and the power and constancy



WALT WHITMAN

of the ocean. Truly the sea was "the cradle endlessly rocking" for this child of Nature. During Walter's fifth year, his father removed to Brooklyn to engage in the builder's trade, but the boy still had free access to the ancestral home and to the wild and unfrequented parts of the island. There are hundreds of allusions that prove Whitman to have been much more of a country-bred than a city-bred boy.

*The period of Whitman's self-development.* His education in the public schools of Brooklyn closed when he was thirteen. He began now to help earn his own bread by working in a lawyer's office as an errand boy. He soon entered upon an apprenticeship to the printer's trade, however, and until his seventeenth year found employment in various capacities in printing establishments. Then for two or three years he taught country schools on Long Island, boarding around, as was the custom, and familiarizing himself with the life of the common people. He was a prime favorite with old and young, playing ball with the boys and engaging in his favorite sport of fishing as opportunity afforded. It is said that he succeeded admirably as a teacher, using a sort of oral method of his own invention, and commanding always the respect and affection of his pupils and patrons. Then he opened a printing office at Huntington and founded a weekly paper, *The Long Islander*. His success in this venture was not pronounced, and the paper soon changed hands, but this was the beginning of his career as a journalist. He now contributed sentimental sketches and stories to some of the New York papers, and worked in a desultory sort of way at his trade of printing. This was his fallow or "loafing" period, as he called it. He was studying men and women in real life with all the intensity and constancy of application that many another youth puts on his college course. The city streets and the country lanes, filled with all sorts and conditions of life, were Walt Whitman's university.

*Period of further development through travel and reading.* Whitman was progressing slowly in his chosen field of journalism, and in 1848 he became editor of *The Brooklyn Eagle*, a daily paper of some importance. About this time a gentleman from the South offered him an editorial position on a newly founded daily, *The Crescent*, in New Orleans, and Whitman accepted the position because it would give him an opportunity to see something of America. With his younger brother Jeff he made a leisurely trip down the Mississippi, learning much from these new sights and experiences. He did not remain long in the South, and we find him again making a leisurely working tour back to New York and Brooklyn by way of St. Louis, Chicago, Niagara, and Albany. On this journey of eight thousand miles he was formulating some conception of the sweep and grandeur of the land he loved and was to sing so well. He was still taking life easy, still in his fallow period. "I loaf and invite my soul," he wrote later in the "Song of Myself." He worked but little at his regular business, but spent many hours in loitering around the streets, riding on the tops of cabs, talking and consorting with all sorts and types of people, taking long solitary walks in the woods and swims in the Sound, and letting his imagination brood over all. Besides, he was doing much serious reading of the Bible, Shakespeare, and other English and classical writers.

"*Leaves of Grass*." Whitman's real ambition to become a poet was slowly ripening, and with a kind of solitary persistence he kept brooding over his mission and working surely, steadily, unobtrusively into that style which he afterwards flashed upon the world as a new and original type of poetry. In 1855, set up and printed largely by himself in the office of some friends, appeared the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the strangest, most misunderstood, most maligned book that ever came from the American press. It was like Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* in England, a work of

genius, hooted and hissed and misinterpreted until some knowing ones expounded the riddle. *Leaves of Grass* was written in a kind of unrimed free verse, with lines of from four or five to sixty or even seventy syllables arranged in a sort of phrasal rhythm to suit the ear or the caprice of the author. Whether it is verse or rhythmical prose is still debated. It is certain that there is no other verse like it, and it is also certain that the long prose preface is almost as rhythmical as any other part of the book. Whitman himself admitted much later, when some of the earlier faults had been removed, that he consciously threw out all the conventional machinery of verse, "the entire stock in trade of rhyme-talking heroes and heroines and all the love-sick plots of customary poetry." He constructed his verse "in a loose and free metre of his own, of an irregular length of lines, apparently lawless at first perusal, although on a closer examination a certain regularity appears, like the recurrence of lesser and larger waves on the seashore, rolling in without intermission, and fitfully rising and falling." Readers have almost universally testified that Whitman's verse seems most like real poetry when read aloud out-of-doors, and particularly under the waving trees or by the throbbing sea, with the drift of clouds and the swoop of sea-birds over head. His whole aim was to be himself and no other, to be original and no imitator, to be the spokesman of his own soul and of democratic America, and not an echo of the dead muses of other times and other nations.

*How "Leaves of Grass" was received.* Whitman succeeded in his aim—succeeded so well in writing an entirely new book that when it appeared it was called "the work of some escaped lunatic," and the author was belabored as one whose soul was the reincarnation of "a donkey who died of disappointed love." Lowell could never overcome his disgust for the author of *Leaves of Grass* (1855); Whittier threw the

book into the fire when he read it: but Emerson saw in it distinct evidences of genius and wrote the author a letter which has been frequently reprinted. This letter was the first note of authoritative recognition which Whitman received and the impetus from which his fame has grown. In it Emerson said in part: "I find it [*Leaves of Grass*] the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. . . . I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire. I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere for such a start. . . . It has the best merits, namely of fortifying and encouraging."

*Other editions of "Leaves of Grass."* The next year the second and greatly enlarged edition of *Leaves of Grass* appeared with appended additional matter containing Emerson's letter and Whitman's long reply. In spite of Emerson's generous recognition of a new light, the book did not sell. In England the recognition was more spontaneous, though not enough interest was manifested greatly to encourage the new poet. But Whitman needed no encouragement—at least he was not to be daunted by discouragement. He had determined to have his own way, and neither praise nor blame, encouragement nor discouragement seemed to deflect him in the least from his purpose. Years later he wrote, "The best comfort of the whole business. . . . is that unstop'd and unwarp'd by any influence outside the soul within me, I have had my say entirely in my own way and put it unerringly on record—the value thereof to be decided by time." He did not bid for "soft eulogies, big money returns, nor the approbation of existing schools and conventions"; and so he moved on his way unruffled and undisturbed. The third edition of his book appeared in

1860 with many changes and additions, as was his custom; and in 1891 the tenth and last edition of this remarkable poetic evolution was prepared by the poet, some of it passing through his hands even after he had taken to his bed for the last time.

*Whitman as a hospital nurse during the war.* The Civil War was the culminating experience in Walt Whitman's education as the poet of democracy. He did not volunteer for active service, but his brother George did, and when Walt heard that George was wounded and in a hospital in Virginia he went to the front. Finding his brother already recovered, but thousands of others in the hospitals needing comfort and aid, he became a volunteer nurse in and around Washington. It is said that he literally came into touch with thousands of soldiers while on his rounds, and served them all alike, whether Northern or Southern, high or low, deserving or undeserving, with an unswerving and all-encompassing devotion. He was a strong, clean, healthy, magnetic specimen of manhood; and his very presence seemed a benediction and a curative power to the sick and wounded soldiers.

*Employment in Washington City: "The Good Gray Poet."* After the war Whitman was given a clerkship in the Department of the Interior, and later he was transferred to the Attorney-General's department. It was about this time that W. D. O'Connor, an over-enthusiastic admirer of Whitman, published a pamphlet defending the poet from certain attacks made on him, and from the title of this pamphlet Whitman became familiarly known as "The Good Gray Poet."

*"Drum Taps": his broken health.* It was just at the close of the Civil War that Whitman published a new volume of poems called *Drum Taps*, and when the volume was going through the press he composed four poems which he called "Memorials for President Lincoln," and added them as a



supplement. This supplement contains some of Whitman's very finest work, notably the threnody "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" and the lyric lament "O Captain! My Captain!" From time to time other poems and prose pieces came out, but Whitman's health was now rapidly failing, and in 1873 he suffered a paralytic stroke and had to give up his position in Washington. He went to Camden, New Jersey, and lived with his brother for a few years until he partially recovered his health. During the remainder of his life he lectured occasionally on Lincoln, made journeys to the far West and to Canada, and was the recipient of many visits from friends and admirers. His books now brought him in some money, and he was enabled to buy a modest little home at Camden. Here, even though broken in health, he spent his last days in quiet. He had what he most craved, the comradeship and good-fellowship of those who understood and loved him. In 1888 he suffered the second stroke of paralysis; and from this time until his death, March 26, 1892, he was practically a helpless invalid. But up to the very last he retained his buoyancy of spirit and alertness of mind.

*Whitman's message and personality.* As to Whitman's message in his poetry, his great themes were selfhood, comradeship, love, joy, nature, God, immortality, death, and above all democracy as exemplified in the American states. Edward Holmes analyzes Whitman as being intensely emotional, intensely self-conscious, intensely optimistic, and intensely American. We might add to this the one all-inclusive characteristic, and say he was intensely human. No one ever lived who was more truly, more unmistakably a man. Lincoln's remark squares with every atom of his being: "Well, *he* looks like a *man*!" The only serious weakness to be observed in his poetical output is that it is not always inspired. Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion recollected

in tranquillity." Whitman's poetry seems spontaneous enough, but it does not always express powerful emotion. Like Wordsworth, he was rather self-conscious: he imagined that everything he felt and saw and thought or dreamed was worthy of preservation. And so, like Wordsworth again, he sometimes reaches banality instead of inspiration. The logical evolution of some of his poems is vague or even totally indistinguishable. He injects topics that seem utterly foreign to his purpose, and gives long catalogues of names and conglomerate masses of facts that can only be properly designated by the term "balderdash."

*Whitman's rank and influence.* And yet when we look back on Whitman, now that more than a quarter of a century has passed since his death, we can begin to place him in his true historic perspective. There is no doubt that he was one of the largest-brained, biggest-hearted men of his century. He had little or no formal education; and yet without model or foreign influence, when he felt the stirrings of genius within him he made his own instrument of expression merely by the rule of doing it. We may say that Walt Whitman was a born poetical genius who found his own unique, original vehicle of expression at thirty-five, and tried to perfect himself in it by inflicting it on an unprepared public for the next thirty-five years. Whitman is not a broadly popular poet and perhaps never will be, for his work as a whole offers too strong a meat and is too fundamental and cosmic for the general public. But he has profoundly influenced many of our later writers; in fact, he may be placed next to Emerson in his power of stimulating other minds. There is no longer any question as to his genius or, in spite of his frequent coarseness and vulgarity, as to the elemental purity and goodness of his nature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among the many lives of Whitman, perhaps the best for general use are those by Bliss Perry in the American Men of Letters Series and by George R. Carpenter in the English Men of Letters Series. Two other sympathetic books should be consulted, the studies by John Addington Symonds (English) and John Burroughs (American).

THE MINOR NEW YORK AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC  
STATES POETS

**The grouping of the minor poets.** Besides Bryant and Whitman who are treated above as major New York poets, there are three minor poets who are usually classed as Knickerbocker poets,—namely, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Joseph Rodman Drake, and Nathaniel Parker Willis. Following these in the latter half of the century come two comparatively important poets and prose writers, Bayard Taylor and Edmund Clarence Stedman. Finally, Richard Hovey may be singled out as a representative figure among the younger poets who made the city of New York their residence during the later years of the century. These, with other song writers and minor poets, comprise the list of the most important verse makers of the New York and Middle Atlantic States group.

**Halleck and Drake: "The Croakers."** Fitz-Greene Halleck (1790-1867) was born in Connecticut, but came to New York in his twenty-second year to enter business. He had secured a fairly good education in his youth and had taught school in New England a year or two before he removed to New York. He was intensely interested in the new poetry of the early nineteenth century as it appeared under the democratic and romantic impulses which swept over England. Thomas Campbell and Lord Byron were his especial favorites at the time he met Joseph Rodman Drake (1795-1820), a young New York physician. The two writers have become inseparably associated in literature because they wrote together some playful satires in a series of light verses which they published during a period of three months in 1819, mainly in *The New York Evening Post*, under the signature of "The Croakers," or "Croaker and Company."

*Drake's "The Culprit Fay."* Drake was attacked by consumption and died at the early age of twenty-five. He

left in manuscript a romantic poem called "The Culprit Fay," a remarkable piece of work dashed off in the brief space of three days during the summer of 1816, but not published until several years after his death. It is the story of a fairy knight who fell in love with a mortal maiden and was doomed to suffer various penalties because of this breaking of fairy law. The poem is an unusual production for so young a man, for Drake was only twenty-one when he wrote it. Because of its lack of the careful organization, the well defined evolution that art demands of long imaginative poems of its kind, "The Culprit Fay" is not of any great permanent value. It is full of pleasing fanciful descriptions, however, and it has a decidedly attractive lilt in its rhythm. Also in its aim to people the American woods and streams with a company of fairies and to create a native supernatural background, the poem is distinctly noteworthy. The influence of English fairy lore, such as is found in Shakespeare's and Herrick's descriptions of Queen Mab and her court, and in Coleridge's "Christabel," is easily discernible; but despite these evidences of foreign influence Drake shows considerable originality and great promise in this fanciful field of fairyland.

"*The American Flag*." One other poem by Drake is still frequently read,—namely, his intensely patriotic lyric, "The American Flag." This song, though unfortunately not set to a popular tune, should be classed with Timothy Dwight's "Columbia," Francis Hopkinson's "Hail, Columbia," and Francis Scott Key's "The Star-Spangled Banner," as one of the choicest of our patriotic lyrics. The noteworthy fact about this poem is that it was not written in any period of war or unusual political excitement, being first published as one of the "Croaker" papers in 1819, and hence it is universal in its appeal to Americans and is appropriate to any period of our history. The lyric is given here in full.

THE AMERICAN FLAG

I

When Freedom from her mountain height  
Unfurled her standard to the air,  
She tore the azure robe of night,  
And set the stars of glory there.  
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes  
The milky baldric of the skies,  
And striped its pure celestial white,  
With streakings of the morning light;  
Then from his mansion in the sun  
She called her eagle bearer down,  
And gave into his mighty hand,  
The symbol of her chosen land.

II

Majestic monarch of the cloud,  
Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,  
To hear the tempest trummings loud  
And see the lightning lances driven,  
When strive the warriors of the storm,  
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven,  
Child of the sun! to thee 't is given  
To guard the banner of the free,  
To hover in the sulphur smoke,  
And bid its blendings shine afar,  
Like rainbows of the cloud of war,  
The harbingers of victory!

III

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,  
The sign of hope and triumph high,  
When speaks the signal trumpet tone,  
And the long line comes gleaming on.  
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,  
Has dimm'd the glistening bayonet,  
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn  
To where thy sky-born glories burn,  
And as his springing steps advance,  
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.  
And when the cannon-mouthings loud  
Heave in wild wreaths the battle shroud,

And gory sabres rise and fall  
 Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall;  
 Then shall thy metcor glances glow,  
     And cowering foes shall shrink beneath  
 Each gallant arm that strikes below  
     That lovely messenger of death.

## IV

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave  
 Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;  
 When death, careering on the gale,  
 Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,  
 And frightened waves rush wildly back  
 Before the broadside's reeling rack,  
 Each dying wanderer of the sea  
 Shall look at once to heaven and thee,  
 And smile to see thy splendours fly  
 In triumph o'er his closing eye.

## V

Flag of the free heart's hope and home,  
     By angel hands to valour given;  
 Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,  
     And all thy hues were born in heaven.  
 Forever float that standard sheet!  
     Where breathes the foe but falls before us,  
 With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,  
     And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

*Halleck's popular poems.* Though Drake seemed to give more promise of developing into a first-rate poet, Halleck lived longer and reached a wider popular audience. His best known lyric is the lament he wrote upon the death of his dear friend Drake, the first stanza of which remains familiar through popular quotation:

Green be the turf above thee,  
 Friend of my better days;  
 None knew thee but to love thee,  
 None named thee but to praise.

One other piece by Halleck, well known because it was formerly extremely popular as a declamation, is his "Marco

Bozzaris," a patriotic narrative poem dealing with the Greek struggle to throw off the hated sovereignty of Turkey. It will be remembered that Byron—who, by the way, exerted a strong influence on Halleck, as is evidenced both by the quality of "Marco Bozzaris" and by Halleck's long poem "Fanny," a satire on New York society written in imitation of Byron's "Don Juan,"—lost his life in his efforts to aid the Greek patriots. "Marco Bozzaris" opens with the lines:

At midnight, in his guarded tent,  
The Turk was dreaming of the hour  
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,  
Should tremble at his power;

contains in its climax the fiery lines,

Strike—till the last armed foe expires!  
Strike—for your altars and your fires!  
Strike—for the green graves of your sires,  
God, and your native land!

and concludes, after the death of the hero, with the often quoted passage,

For thou art Freedom's now and Fame's,  
One of the few, the immortal names  
That were not born to die.

**N. P. Willis.** Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806–1867) belongs to that group of authors who enjoy wide popularity in their lifetime only to be speedily neglected or forgotten by posterity. He was born in Portland, Maine, was educated at Yale, and started his journalistic career in Boston; but he early came to New York to become one of the editors of *The New York Mirror*; and through this periodical and other New York literary journals he built up his wide influence and reputation as a poet, critic, and writer of tales, sketches, and travel pictures. He also wrote one novel, two

dramas, and several ambitious longer poems. His early poems were mostly on Bible subjects, as represented by "David's Lament for Absalom," "Hagar in the Wilderness," and "Jephtha's Daughter," and these naturally gave Willis a wide vogue among the ultra-religious Americans of his day. But posterity has almost entirely neglected all that he wrote except one chance lyric called "Unseen Spirits," which Poe called the best of Willis's productions. Willis possessed a charming personality and was a genial patron of literature. He deserves to be remembered for the encouragement he offered to young American writers and for the impetus he gave to the appreciation of good literature among all classes.

**Bayard Taylor: his poetry.** Another poet of the middle states to be remembered as one who rose almost to the first rank of creative writers and certainly to the first rank of poetical translators is Bayard Taylor (1825-1878). He was born in Pennsylvania, and began at an early age to compose verse, a volume of which he published before he was twenty. Being possessed of a strong desire to go abroad, he undertook, at the age of nineteen, practically without money, to travel on foot throughout Europe. His newspaper travel letters were so well received that he published a volume of them in 1846 under the title of *Views Afoot*. This book gave him a considerable reputation as a pleasing prose stylist, and he was in consequence employed as a member of the staff of *The New York Tribune*. He later traveled practically all over the eastern world, writing long descriptive letters, many of which he afterwards collected into books. The best of his original poetry, perhaps, is that inspired by the Orient; most of this he gathered together in the volume entitled *Poems of the Orient* (1854). The passionate "Bedouin Song," the most noteworthy of Taylor's shorter poems, is worthy of complete quotation as an example of his lyric gift at its best.



BEDOUIN SONG

From the Desert I come to thee  
On a stallion shod with fire;  
And the winds are left behind  
In the speed of my desire.  
Under thy window I stand,  
And the midnight hears my cry:  
I love thee! I love but thee,  
With a love that shall not die  
*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

Look from thy window and see  
My passion and my pain;  
I lie on the sands below,  
And I faint in thy disdain.  
Let the night-winds touch thy brow  
With the heat of my burning sigh,  
And melt thee to hear the vow  
Of a love that shall not die  
*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

My steps are nightly driven,  
By the fever in my breast,  
To hear from thy lattice breathed  
The word that shall give me rest.  
Open the door of thy heart,  
And open thy chamber door,  
And my kisses shall teach thy lips  
The love that shall fade no more  
*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

*His translation of Faust.* Taylor was a most industrious writer of books, publishing some thirty-five or more volumes of varied character during his active career as poet, journalist, and professional traveler; but he wrote too much and too

fast to meet the severe demands of permanent literature. Perhaps his most signal service to English literature is his well known metrical translation of the great German masterpiece of the nineteenth century,—namely, Goethe's *Faust*. He had been strongly attracted to the German language even from his early youth, and after his travels in Germany, his extensive study of German literature at first hand, and his marriage to Marie Hansen, the daughter of a German astronomer, he undertook, with a high sense of the seriousness and importance of his task, to translate into English the greatest of all German poems. It is generally recognized that Taylor's is the best metrical rendering of *Faust* into English that has yet been made.

**Edmund Clarence Stedman.** It is difficult to say whether Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833-1908) deserves higher praise as a critic of poetry or as a poet. He had a rather odd career for a literary man of any type. He was dismissed from Yale because of some wild pranks. He then wandered about, becoming in succession the editor of several country newspapers. He traveled around selling clocks, and then became a real estate broker in New York, where he won some notice by his lively poetical contributions to *The New York Tribune*. He acted as a reporter for several New York dailies, went to the front as a war correspondent during the Civil War, obtained a government clerkship in the department of the Attorney-General at Washington, and finally gave up this position to return to New York. He later secured a seat on the New York Exchange and held it until 1900, at which time he retired from business to devote his last years entirely to literature. During all these years of active business life he had never given up his study of literature or the production of original poetry. He was a persistent reader of American and Victorian poetry, and his services to literature in his generous appreciation of many younger authors, in his own creative work, and in his

efforts in behalf of the cause of international copyright should give him the right to honorable mention in any history of our literature.

*Stedman as a poet.* Stedman began writing verse while he was in college, winning a prize at Yale with his poem "Westminster Abbey." He wrote many poems on the stirring events of his time, notably his patriotic lyrics on John Brown and on Abraham Lincoln. He boldly included fifteen of his poems in his *American Anthology*, and his collected volume equals in bulk the work of most of the other American poets. Still there are none of his poems that may be classed among the permanent masterpieces of our literature. His "Pan in Wall Street" shows how the appeal of pastoral music came to him in the midst of his business career, but it also indicates that poetry is a jealous and severe mistress, and that no one who allows any large part of his energy to be absorbed in business can hope to rise to a position of great eminence in the arts.

*Stedman as a critic.* Doubtless Stedman will be longer remembered as a critic than as a poet. Among his anthologies and critical productions should be mentioned first of all *A Library of American Literature* (1888), a standard reference work in eleven volumes edited by Stedman in collaboration with Miss Ellen M. Hutchinson; and next to this ambitious anthology should be mentioned *A Victorian Anthology* (1895) and *An American Anthology* (1901), both standard poetical anthologies. *Victorian Poets* (1875) and *Poets of America* (1885) are two of the most dependable, incisive, and stimulating critical works in our literature; and *The Nature and Elements of Poetry* (1892), a series of lectures delivered at Johns Hopkins University, contains a great deal of informing and suggestive criticism for the student of poetry. Practically all general libraries which make any pretension to completeness possess some or all of these books.

**Richard Hovey.** Though born in Illinois, Richard Hovey (1864-1900) belongs by training and residence to the East, and since the better part of his work was done after he became a teacher of English literature at Barnard College and Columbia University, we may place him in the New York group. He prepared himself for the ministry, but turned to newspaper work and the stage, and finally to teaching. He was the most aspiring of all our younger poets, though his achievement was cut short by an early death. He attempted to rival the greatest poets both in choice of subjects and in treatment. He wrote Greek odes, Arcadian lyrics, stirring patriotic hymns, and many occasional poems; he dared to add a new canto to Byron's "Don Juan"; he entered Tennyson's field of Arthurian legends and planned a series of nine dramatic poems, which, had he lived to complete them—though they are cast in a different form from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*—might have challenged comparison with the greater poet's work. Besides publishing three successive volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894-1896-1900), written in collaboration with his friend Bliss Carman, the Canadian poet, and two other books of lyric verse, *Along the Trail, a Book of Lyrics* (1898) and *To the End of the Trail* (1908), Hovey completed four of the nine dramas planned to be included under the general title *Launcelot and Guenevere; a Poem in Dramas*. These were "The Quest of Merlin, a Masque"; "The Marriage of Guenevere, a Tragedy"; "The Birth of Galahad, a Romantic Drama"; and "Taleisin, a Masque." A considerable part of the fifth piece, which was to be called "The Graal, a Tragedy," was left in fragmentary form along with outline sketches and fragments for the four remaining dramas. This sequence, even in its incomplete form, is undoubtedly the most notable piece of work yet done by an American in the field of Arthurian romance. As has been said, Hovey certainly deserves to be placed among "the inheritors of

unfulfilled renown." His war poems, written during the Spanish-American War, are particularly appropriate reading now that the great European War is absorbing so much attention. The following passage from "The Call of the Bugles" will illustrate Hovey's enthusiastic patriotism, and at the same time show how well parts of this poem fit recent conditions.

Not against war,  
But against wrong  
League we in mighty bonds from sea to sea!  
Peace, when the world is free!  
Peace, when there is no thong,  
Fetter, nor bar!  
No scourges for men's backs,  
No thumbscrews and no racks —  
For body or soul!  
No unjust law!  
No tyrannous control  
Of brawn or maw!  
But, though the day be far,  
Till then, war!

Blow, bugles!  
Over the rumbling drum and marching feet  
Sound your high, sweet defiance to the air!  
Great is war—great and fair!  
The terrors of his face are grand and sweet,  
And to the wise, the calm of God is there.  
God clothes himself in darkness as in light,  
— The God of love, but still the God of might.  
Nor love they least  
Who strike with right good will  
To vanquish ill  
And fight God's battle upward from the beast.

There is perhaps a touch of "jingoism" in Hovey's war poetry, but it must be remembered that he was still a young man when he died. If he had lived he would doubtless have moved on into a higher type of philosophic and unselfish patriotism.

**The song writers.** New York and the Middle States have furnished a number of our most successful popular song writers. Samuel Woodworth (1785-1842) was born in Massachusetts, but he spent a large part of his life in New York as an editor. He is remembered for the sentimental ballad "The Old Oaken Bucket." John Howard Payne (1791-1852) was born in New York, but he lived a sort of nomadic life as an actor, dramatist, dramatic critic, and foreign consul, sojourning in many cities in many different lands. He is now remembered almost solely for the sincere and pathetic song "Home, Sweet Home," which was inserted as a lyric in "Clari, or The Maid of Milan," a sentimental light opera otherwise of little literary worth. Payne's best drama is his blank-verse tragedy called "Brutus, or The Fall of Tarquin." George Pope Morris (1802-1864) and Dr. Thomas Dunn English (1819-1902), both of Philadelphia, are remembered respectively for a single successful lyric of a simple and reminiscent or sentimental type, Morris being the author of "Woodman, Spare that Tree," and Dr. English of the well known song, "Ben Bolt." Pennsylvania may also lay claim to Stephen C. Foster (1826-1864), since he was born in Pittsburgh, though he lived most of his life in Cincinnati and is frequently thought of as a Middle Westerner. Foster had a fine sense for simple heart melodies, and several of his songs have become fixed in the American popular ear more securely than any other native song except perhaps "Home, Sweet Home." The best known of his songs are "Old Black Joe," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Old Folks at Home."

**Other minor poets.** It will be impossible here to give a full discussion of the remaining New York and Middle States' poets, though there are many others that should be mentioned both for the excellency of their technique and in some cases, particularly among the more recent poets, for the freshness and modernity of their lyric notes. Among

the best known of these poets of the central section may be named the following: Thomas Buchanan Read (1822-1872), author of "Sheridan's Ride," "The Closing Scene," and many other longer and shorter poems; Hans Breitman, whose real name was Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903), writer of humorous ballads in a sort of broken German English, or Pennsylvania Dutch, dialect; Richard Henry Stoddard (1825-1903), a prolific but unequal writer of narrative and lyric verse; Alice (1820-1871) and Phoebe Cary (1824-1871), authors of many child lyrics and religious songs, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" being the best known of the younger sister's hymns; Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), for many years editor of *The Century Magazine* and author of numerous poems of a deeply religious or spiritual character; George H. Boker (1823-1890), writer of good lyrics and also the author of what has been pronounced the finest acting tragedy produced in America, "Francesca da Rimini"; Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), the widely admired young Jewish poetess; the Reverend Henry van Dyke (1852-), writer of excellent idyllic prose and polished verse; Clinton Scollard (1860-) and Frank Dempster Sherman (1860-1916), both fine technicians in their lyric verse; Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-), author of delightful child poems and a prize drama, "The Piper"; Percy Mackaye (1875-), descended from a family of famous actors in New York City, author of "The Scarecrow" and a dozen or more other successful stage plays, a number of masques and one-act plays, and also some patriotic odes and other literary lyrics of merit; Witter Bynner (1881-), author of "An Ode to Harvard," "The New World," and "Iphigenia in Tauris." Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918) and Alan Seeger (1888-1916), each of whom gave up his life on the battle-fields of France, have reached a higher artistic excellence than any others of the hundreds of poets that have been inspired by the soul-stirring events of the great World War. The best of

Kilmer's pre-war poetry was published in *Trees and Other Poems* (1914). His most powerful and pathetic war poem is the "Prayer of a Soldier of France." By common consent Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" has been accepted as the greatest war poem produced by an American.<sup>1</sup>

THE NEW YORK AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES  
ESSAYISTS AND GENERAL PROSE WRITERS

**The more important prose writers.** The more important New York and Middle Atlantic States prose writers may be grouped in two classes,—namely, the essayists and general prose stylists, and the story writers and novelists. Nathaniel Parker Willis, Bayard Taylor, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and Henry van Dyke, all of whom wrote good prose, have already been named among the poets. While dozens of additional names might be mentioned, the three writers of general prose that deserve special attention in the Middle States group are George William Curtis, Charles Dudley Warner, and John Burroughs.

**George William Curtis.** George William Curtis (1824–1892) was born in Rhode Island, but when he was fifteen he was carried to New York by his family and set to work as a clerk in a business establishment. Later he came under the influence of the transcendental movement which swept over New England, and for a time he lived at Brook Farm as one of the students or boarders. Then he took up his residence at Concord, in order to be near Emerson and some of the other noted transcendentalists there. After several years of travel abroad, during which period he wrote some good travel sketches, Curtis finally settled down to editorial work in New York City, being engaged principally on the

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<sup>1</sup>The summarizing lists of minor writers with accompanying dates found here and elsewhere in this volume are not intended to be set as memory tasks for the pupils, but rather to be used by way of suggestion for further reading outside of the classroom.



publications issued by Harper and Brothers. His best prose work is contained in the idyllic *Prue and I* (1856); in the *Potiphar Papers* (1854); in the essays collected from the Editor's Easy Chair, which he conducted for a number of years for *Harper's Magazine*; and in his popular *Oration and Addresses*. He carried his idealistic philosophy into politics and business in such a way as to set a very high standard for his contemporaries and at the same time to give a more than temporary value to his writings. He wrote one novel, *Trumps* (1862), but the delicate and idyllic *Prue and I*, in which the imaginative element of fiction and the intimate personal tone of the familiar essay are mingled, stands out above all Curtis's other productions, and may be classed as one of the distinctive American prose masterpieces of the mid-nineteenth century.

**Charles Dudley Warner.** Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900) was born and reared in Massachusetts, but he was educated at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, and in law at the University of Pennsylvania; and after practicing his profession for a year in Chicago, he settled permanently in New York to engage in editorial and literary work. His principal prose works are *My Summer in a Garden* (1870), a collection of pleasing light essays and sketches; *Backlog Studies* (1872), treating largely of outdoor material; several novels, among them *The Gilded Age* (1873), written in collaboration with Mark Twain; and *Being a Boy* (1877), a delightfully reminiscent book of his own boyhood. Warner's chief claim to literary distinction is in his genial humor, kindly sentimentality, and perfect sincerity and naturalness of style. Many a young reader has learned to appreciate the art of restrained and yet effective prose through such sketches as "How I Killed a Bear" and "Camping Out." Warner is also often referred to as the editor of *The Library of the World's Best Literature* (1897).

**John Burroughs.** Among the recent writers of essays

dealing with natural history and outdoor life in a sympathetic and more or less scientific spirit, the most prominent is John Burroughs (1837-). He was born in Roxbury, New York, and except for a few years devoted to business and travel, he has spent his entire life studying outdoor life at first hand in his rural retreats in New York. He has published a number of excellent books on nature and some discriminating critical essays. Of the dozen or more volumes on nature which Burroughs has produced, perhaps the best are *Wake Robin* (1871), *Birds and Poets* (1877), and *Locusts and Wild Honey* (1879). Though not so well known as a writer of literary criticism, Burroughs is in reality one of our best critics. A recent writer has said that Burroughs's essays on literary subjects "may be classed with the sanest and most illuminating critical work in American literature."<sup>1</sup> His essays have been collected in a volume called *Indoor Studies* (1889). Burroughs was one of the earliest and most enthusiastic friends and champions of Walt Whitman, and his *Notes on Walt Whitman, as Poet and Person*, and *Walt Whitman, a Study*, are important contributions to the large amount of Whitman criticism which has appeared in England and America in recent years.

**Other essayists.** To this earlier group of general essayists may be added the names of several writers who have gained distinction by a steady adherence to the more distinctly literary type of essays: William Winter (1836-1917), the distinguished dramatic critic, author of *Shakespeare's England* (1888), and *Gray Days and Gold* (1891); Hamilton Wright Mabie (1845-1916), literary editor of *The Outlook* and author of many books, among them *My Study Fire* in three volumes, dated respectively 1890, 1891, 1899; Miss Agnes Repplier (1858-), of Philadelphia, who has published more than a dozen volumes, among them *Books and Men* (1888), *Essays in Idleness* (1893), *Americans and Others* (1912);

<sup>1</sup> F. L. Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870*, p. 153.



*Courtesy of King-Brown Company*  
JOHN BURROUGHS AND JOHN MUIR

and Paul Elmer More (1864-), whose *Shelburne Essays* are held by discerning critics to be the most discriminating American critical work of recent years. Mr. More was born in St. Louis and partly educated there, but his best work has been done under the influence of New England and New York environments. To these may be added the names of two of our later presidents, —Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), who was born and reared in New York City, but who spent several years of his life in Montana and the Middle West; and Woodrow Wilson (1856-), who was born in Virginia, but who has lived the greater part of his mature life in New Jersey, where he was for a number of years president of Princeton University and later governor of the state. Roosevelt's best work is to be found in his *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), *Ranch Life and Hunting Trail* (1888), and *The Winning of the West* (1889-1896), all of which reflect his interest in Western life. After he became famous in the Spanish-American War, he published *The Rough Riders* (1899) and *The Strenuous Life* (1900). He has also written many volumes dealing with his hunting and exploring trip in foreign lands. His last volume, *The Great Adventure* (1918), is perhaps the best of several books of his dealing with the World War. Wilson has published a number of volumes treating mainly political and historical subjects, among them *An Old Master and Other Political Essays* (1893), *Mere Literature and Other Essays* (1893), *A History of the American People* (1907), and *The New Freedom* (1913). His great "War Message Address" (April 2, 1917) and his "Flag Day Speech" (June 14, 1917), as well as others of his public addresses, because of their cogency, their wonderful phrasing, their sincere patriotism, and their elemental eloquence, will assuredly take a permanent place in our literary as well as in our political history. In fact, Woodrow Wilson has been hailed throughout the world not only as the spokesman of America but as the foremost statesman of the age.

THE NEW YORK NOVELISTS AND STORY WRITERS

**The more important writers of fiction.** A long chapter might be devoted to the New York and Middle Atlantic States' writers of fiction, but we shall have to limit our brief comment to a small number of the most notable. Irving and Cooper, the two major writers of fiction in the early New York school, have already been given fuller treatment. To these we may add from the recent school the names of F. Marion Crawford, who, judged both by the wide circulation and the literary value of his fiction, is perhaps the best of the later New York writers; and Stephen Crane, who if not in attainment at least in promise should be given a high rank among our later writers of fiction. O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), one of the most widely read of the twentieth-century writers, was connected in his later years with the New York group; but since he began his career in the South, he is treated elsewhere in this volume as one of the story writers of the South. To Philadelphia we may assign S. Weir Mitchell and Frank R. Stockton as the most important of the later writers of fiction in that center, and since they were older than Crawford and Crane, we shall take them up first.

**S. Weir Mitchell.** Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), though born in Virginia, was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, and practically his whole life was spent in the city of his adoption. Not satisfied with winning fame as a physician, he determined to develop his literary gifts also. He began writing stories just after the Civil War, but it was not until he published *Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker*, in 1897 that he attained a national popularity. The scene of this story was laid in Philadelphia during the "days that tried men's souls," and it is now generally recognized as one of the best of American historical novels. Other novels by Dr. Mitchell worthy of special mention are *The Adventures*

of *François* (1898), *Dr. North and His Friends* (1900), *Circumstance* (1901), and *The Red City* (1907).

**Frank R. Stockton.** Frank Richard Stockton (1834-1902) was born and educated in Philadelphia and is usually associated with that city, though much of his literary work was done in connection with editorial positions which he held in New York City. The story that brought him fame, "The Lady, or the Tiger?" was first published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1882, and has since been reprinted many times as the standard of the type of short story distinguished by peculiarity of situation and doubtful outcome. Stockton was possessed of a whimsical or quizzical turn of mind, and he seemed to take delight in creating odd and striking situations and in making humorous and tantalizing conclusions. He is always entertaining, but there is no great constructive power and no profound and searching character analysis in his works. *Rudder Grange* (1879) is perhaps his best longer story. His fame will doubtless rest upon his ingenious short stories depicting ludicrous and yet more or less convincing situations, such as may be found in "The Lady, or the Tiger?" "Negative Gravity," "The Transferred Ghost," and "The Late Mrs. Null."

**F. Marion Crawford.** Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909), though descended from a distinguished American family, was born in Italy and really spent most of his life abroad. He was educated partly in New England and partly in English and German universities; and he began his literary career at Harvard University. However, he was associated with New York life more intimately in his later literary career than with any other part of America, writing several novels depicting society life in the American metropolis and himself living mostly in New York whenever he visited this country. Hence, though he is quite as much a cosmopolitan as an American writer, we may place Crawford among the New York novelists. He wrote an enormous

number of entertaining volumes of fiction, publishing forty-five novels in all, and as many as five in one year during his active literary career of twenty-seven years. His first book was *Mr. Isaacs* (1882), a story dealing with life in India, but it is generally conceded that his best stories are those which deal with Italian life and scenes. The four novels with Italian coloring, *Saracinesca* (1887), *Sant' Ilario* (1889), *Don Orsino* (1892), and *Corleone, a Sicilian Story* (1897), a continuous sequence, rank among the most delightfully entertaining novels written during the late nineteenth century. Many other of Crawford's novels are equally popular, however, such stories as *Dr. Claudius* (1883), *A Roman Singer* (1884), *Greifenstein* (1889), and *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance* (1890), having one after the other attracted and held thousands of readers. Crawford was a true cosmopolite. He knew the life of many lands; he has portrayed scenes and characters in Italy, Germany, England, Turkey, India, ancient Persia and Arabia, and America, all with convincing and entertaining skill. *The Three Fates* (1892) is perhaps the best of his stories dealing with New York society life, though *Katharine Lauderdale* (1894) and its sequel, *The Ralstons* (1894), also give interesting portraits of this same society. So wide is his range, so versatile his story-telling gift, and so adept his literary skill that he will probably long remain one of our most popular novelists.

**Stephen Crane.** Stephen Crane (1870-1900), the youngest of the late nineteenth century New York group of novelists, was born in New Jersey and educated at Lafayette College and Syracuse University, entered journalism as a war correspondent of *The New York Journal* during the Spanish-American War, and rose rapidly to distinction in his profession. He wrote stories dealing with slum life in New York (*Bowery Tales*), with child life (*Whilomville Stories*), and with New York society (*The Third Violet*); but his

one notable production is *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), a remarkable story centered around the battle of Chancellorsville in the Civil War. It is really astonishing how thirty years after the war a young man of twenty-five could have conjured up such realistic battle scenes as are contained in this book.

**Minor fiction writers.** Among the great number of novelists and short-story writers of the Middle Atlantic States group we may name the following with a typical work or works by each: Edward Payson Roe (1838-1888), *Barriers Burned Away* (1872), *The Opening of a Chestnut Burr* (1874); Edward Noyes Westcott (1847-1898), *David Harum* (1898); Henry van Dyke (1852-), *Little Rivers* (1895) and *Fisherman's Luck* (1899), two outdoor studies, and numerous short stories, among them "The Story of the Other Wise Man," perhaps the most beautiful Christmas story written in America; Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855-1896), *Short Sixes* (1891); Harold Frederic (1856-1898), *The Copperhead and Other Stories of the North* (1893) and *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896); Kate Douglas Wiggin (1859-), *The Bird's Christmas Carol* (1888), *The Story of Patsy* (1889), *Timothy's Quest* (1890), *Penelope's Progress* (1898), *Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm* (1903), and *New Chronicles of Rebecca* (1907); Irving Bacheller (1859-), *Eben Holden* (1900), *D'ri and I* (1900); Owen Wister (1860-), *The Virginian* (1900), *Philosophy Four* (1903), *Lady Baltimore* (1906); Edith Wharton (1862-), *The Valley of Decision* (1902), *The House of Mirth* (1905), *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Reef* (1912), *The Pentecost of Calamity* (1915); Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916), *Gallagher and Other Stories* (1891), *Van Bibber and Others* (1892); Paul Leicester Ford (1865-1902), *The Honorable Peter Stirling* (1894), *Janice Meredith* (1894); Anne Douglas Sedgwick (1873-), *A Fountain Sealed* (1907), *Tante* (1911), *The Encounter* (1914).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See footnote page 140.



## 2. THE NEW ENGLAND GROUP

### PRELIMINARY SURVEY

**The New England Renaissance.** Three well-defined and far-reaching intellectual movements took rise in New England during the second and third quarters of the century. These were, first, the revolt against the Calvinistic theology of the Puritans, a movement which resulted in Unitarianism; second, the idealistic philosophy introduced from Europe and known in America as Transcendentalism; and third, the anti-slavery or abolition movement in politics, a movement which eventually divided the nation into two intensely antagonistic factions and led more or less directly to the Civil War. The whole intellectual movement in New England has been happily called "the New England Renaissance."<sup>1</sup> Before taking up a survey of the writers of this section, we may well attempt to explain briefly these three movements and thus present the general nature of the revival which came to dominate the thought of New England and of the whole nation, in fact, during this period.

### THE RISE OF UNITARIANISM

**The spirit of liberty.** We have previously discussed the general characteristics of the thought and temper of the Puritan settlers of New England.<sup>2</sup> We come now to observe how the same spirit that led the Pilgrim fathers to leave England in search of religious freedom animated the later New England thinkers in their gradual revolt against the narrowness and personal restraints inspired by the austere and repressive attitude toward life which characterized the Puritan régime in America. The first form in which this revolt expressed itself was within the church. The spirit of the Revolution, which, as we have seen, eventually overthrew English political sovereignty, manifested itself also

<sup>1</sup>By Professor Barrett Wendell in *A Literary History of America*.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 12-14.

in the quiet revolution which took place in religious thought —namely, the dethronement of Calvinism and the gradual acceptance of Unitarianism in its stead.

**Fundamental teachings of Unitarianism.** Harvard College was in its early history the intellectual stronghold of Calvinistic theology, but during the eighteenth century Harvard gradually became more and more independent of this influence, while Yale College in Connecticut became the center of religious conservatism and orthodoxy. The history of the change at Harvard is significant. In 1805 Reverend Henry Ware, a Unitarian minister, was elected, over the protests of the orthodox Calvinistic party, to be Professor of Divinity at Harvard. The Unitarians hold that there is one God and that He made man in his own image; they deny that Jesus is the equal of God, accepting him, however, as the perfect man, or at least the perfect representative of what man may become. They profess to find in man's own nature certain tendencies toward the divine, and hence they declare that there is no need for a Redeemer and consequently no need for a Comforter, or Holy Spirit, to represent this Redeemer. The doctrine of the Trinity is thus gradually dethroned, and the doctrine of the one God, which is the fundamental idea of Unitarianism as is indicated in the name itself, is accepted in its stead.

**Channing's leadership.** William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) was the chief spokesman of the new theology now rising into prominence in New England. He became the minister of the Federal Street Church in Boston in 1803 and remained its pastor for thirty-seven years. In 1819 he preached his famous sermon on Unitarian Christianity, in which he declared for intellectual freedom in religious matters, and particularly in the interpretation of the Scriptures, basing his argument on the text, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." He held that the Scriptures must be interpreted by man in the light of reason rather than blindly

accepted as a matter of faith or mere traditional doctrine. He laid the foundation of virtue in the moral nature of man and held up conscience as the supreme guide of conduct. This spirit of liberalism in religious matters was in effect a reaction against the restraints set up by the strict Calvinistic tenets of the Puritans. One of the final reforms instituted in the new form of worship was the abandonment of the use of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It will be remembered that Emerson, who was the minister of the old Second Church at Boston, retired from the pastorate because he had come to have conscientious scruples in regard to administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**Influence on the New England writers.** Although the sect was at no period strong numerically, Unitarianism became the religious belief of the best intellectual element in New England during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, and held sway until well past the middle of the century, when its influence began to decline. It exerted a powerful force upon the literary products of this period, practically all of the New England writers having either accepted it as their faith or come strongly under its influence. In any interpretation of American literature in the nineteenth century, the remarkable change from the early strict Puritanism or Calvinistic theology to the liberalism of the Unitarian movement cannot be ignored. Unitarianism was more or less intimately connected with Transcendentalism, and also with the rise of the doctrine of the abolition of slavery, and hence it must be constantly kept in mind in interpreting these later phases of the intellectual awakening in New England.

#### THE TRANSCENDENTAL MOVEMENT

**The origin and the meaning of transcendentalism.** There arose in middle Europe during the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries an idealistic

type of philosophy which materially affected the literature of the time. The literary activity resulting partly from this idealistic philosophy and partly from other causes became known as the Romantic Movement. Its principal exponents in England were De Quincey, Coleridge, and Carlyle in prose, and Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats in poetry. Naturally the new impulse found followers in America, and what is known as the Transcendental Movement came into prominence, particularly in the work of Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller (Marquise d'Ossoli), and Bronson Alcott. It is difficult to define Transcendentalism, but in general it may be said to be the recognition of the supremacy of idealism in philosophy, literature, and conduct of life. It is, in fact, an exaltation of the ideal or spiritual over the real or material. With our physical senses we form concepts of what we call the real world; but these are only the appearances of spiritual ideals, and back of all objects perceived by the senses are spiritual realities which man can only perceive through the higher faculties of his soul. Hence, the transcendentalist concludes: Material objects, which ordinarily we think we perceive through our senses as real things, are only the appearances, the symbols, of spiritual forces and realities back of them; hence, also, the realities of the spiritual or the ideal *transcend*, or are superior to, the ordinary appearances in the world of sense. The transcendentalists asserted, then, that we do not depend solely upon the knowledge gained through our senses, that is, our ordinary experiences in the world; nor upon divine revelation of the spiritual world as recorded in the Bible; but upon our intuitions, or upon certain innate, that is, inborn, instincts or concepts in man's nature or soul and the interpretation of these by the individual conscience. They believed that the soul of man was of the same essence as the divine soul, and hence man should give heed to the inner promptings of his own

nature in deciding matters of moral conduct. For example, they held that man realizes the difference between right and wrong by intuition or instinctive revelation in his own nature, rather than by revelation through experience or even through God's divine word. Emerson expressed the central ideas of this philosophy in the little book called *Nature* (1836), in which he drew the distinction between nature or the material world and the soul or the world of spirit; in several of his lectures, particularly in the one called "The Transcendentalist"; and in many of his essays, such as "The Over Soul," "Self-Reliance," "Experience," and "Compensation."

**Popular ridicule of the transcendentalists.** Naturally the enthusiasts or extremists of this philosophy attracted a great deal of ridicule from the public. Bronson Alcott was one of the most impractical and visionary of the transcendental extremists, and he became the target of many a shaft of wit from the practical New England critics of the new philosophy . . . He was accused of living in the clouds, drinking the wind, and feeding on spiritual breakfasts of "bowls of sunshine." The practical New Englanders reminded him that his family could not exist on "bowls of sunshine" and "transcendental moonshine," and these became cant phrases for ridiculing the cult. Because of the mystical and super-subtle notions and the transcendental vaporings of some of the extremists, however, we should not under-estimate the real value and permanent influence of the Transcendental Movement.

**"The Dial."** A good deal of vagueness naturally attends this idealistic philosophy, and it was necessary for the proponents of these vague and abstruse doctrines to have some medium in which to express their thought and bring it before the public for fuller acceptance and discussion. In 1836 the Transcendental Club, sometimes called the Symposium, was organized at Concord; and in 1840, *The Dial* was established

with a remarkable woman, Margaret Fuller—she later married an Italian marquis named Ossoli—as editor. This quarterly journal continued for four years, part of the time under Emerson's direction. It is now highly prized as the chief repository of much of the contemporary expression of the transcendental notions then in vogue. Margaret Fuller wrote for it many critical articles; Emerson contributed some of his most notable essays and poems to it; Bronson Alcott sent in by chapters his "Orphic Sayings"; and other well known men, like George Ripley, Theodore Parker, William Ellery Channing, and Henry David Thoreau, were contributors.

**The Brook Farm experiment.** In addition to *The Dial* another peculiar experiment helped to bring the ideals of the transcendentalists into public notice. This was the establishment in 1841 of a sort of idealistic community at West Roxbury, near Boston, known as Brook Farm. It was intended to afford a school for the training of bright young minds in the new transcendental philosophy, and at the same time to provide a retreat for adults who wished to live the ideal communistic life. The members of the community were to have equal privileges, and each one was expected to do his share of physical labor and also to join in the intellectual and literary activities of the group. It will be remembered that Hawthorne invested one thousand dollars of his savings in the project at its beginning, spent several months in residence at the farm, and later based one of his novels, *The Blithedale Romance*, on his experiences here. The phalanstery, or common home for all the members, was built later, and a number of men and women and younger students took up their residence here for longer or shorter periods. The experiment attracted widespread attention throughout New England and even in certain parts of the Old World. Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and many prominent persons made occasional visits of

several days' length to the community. From a practical point of view the experiment proved a failure, for the resident members knew too little about practical agriculture to make anything from the land, and the income from the school was insufficient to pay running expenses. When the main building burned in 1847, the community was broken up and the experiment abandoned. Little of purely literary value resulted directly from the Brook Farm experiment, but the influence of this effort to put the idealistic theories of the transcendentalists into practical living must be taken into account in estimating the literary output of New England during this period.

#### THE RISE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ABOLITION

**Introductory statement.** The growth of the demand for the abolition of negro slavery in America is intimately interwoven with the rise of Unitarian theology and transcendental philosophy in New England. Abolition became later a political and social question, but in its beginning it was an offshoot of the new spirit for setting free mind and soul as announced in the religious and philosophic reforms just mentioned. Since the question finally became one of practical politics, its progress is usually more or less fully treated in school histories of the United States, and hence here we need only glance at its literary aspects.

**Literary products: pamphleteers and orators.** Naturally a question of public policy like the abolition of slavery would call forth two distinct schools of orators and political writers, and naturally the North, animated by the influences for personal and intellectual liberty emanating from the two religious and intellectual movements just described, would stand for the complete emancipation of the negro slaves; naturally, too, the South, where slavery had proved to be most successful in the agricultural pursuits of that section, would favor the continuance of the institution of

slavery. In New England, particularly, the aid of pure literature was also called in, and we have a great mass of anti-slavery poems, such as those of Whittier, Lowell, and Longfellow among the greater poets; and purpose novels, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But the bulk of the literature connected with the movement for abolition consisted of patriotic orations and argumentative speeches, essays and polemical tracts, and the like. Whittier, Lowell, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and many others contributed to the leading abolition journals, such as *The Liberator*, founded by Garrison in Boston in 1831, and *The Pennsylvania Freeman*, edited for a number of years by Whittier. The literary value of this controversial writing and this partisan oratory, as we have already shown in our discussion of the Revolutionary literature, is slight and transitory. We cannot pass over this material, however, without mentioning the names of such orators as Daniel Webster (1782-1852), Edward Everett (1794-1865), Theodore Parker (1810-1860), Wendell Phillips (1811-1886), and Charles Sumner (1811-1874). The orations of some of these have reached a wider fame because of their more general patriotic or literary nature, such as Webster's great address at the laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill monument, known as "The First Bunker Hill Oration," his speech on the American Constitution, usually called "Webster's Reply to Hayne," delivered in the "Great Debate" in Congress in 1830, and Everett's oft-repeated speech on "George Washington."

#### THE MAJOR NEW ENGLAND WRITERS

**The major writers classified.** The seven major writers of New England are, by common consent, Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Thoreau, and Lowell.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bryant is also essentially a New England poet, but since he lived so long in New York he has been treated elsewhere in this volume.



Emerson is classed as an ethical teacher and essayist, but he is almost equally well known as a poet. Hawthorne, the great romancer, wrote no poetry, but because of the highly imaginative and artistic quality of his prose tales he is frequently referred to as the belated prose poet of Puritan New England. Longfellow and Whittier are thought of primarily as poets, though each of them wrote a considerable amount of prose. Holmes and Lowell are about equally famous as prose writers and poets. Thoreau wrote some poetry, but he is now almost entirely remembered as a writer of essays interpretative of nature. Together these seven New England authors make up by far the most important school of American writers. We shall consider them separately in sequence, but the student should remember that they were all more or less closely associated one with another, and that their literary products as a whole represent the best output of what Professor Wendell has called the New England Renaissance.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson.** Matthew Arnold, in his lecture on Emerson, said that if we should judge him with perfect impartiality we would have to admit that Emerson is not a great poet, not a great prose writer, not even a great philosopher, but that he is "preëminently the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." In ranking Emerson relatively in American literature, however, we do not hesitate to say that he is one of our great poets, even though he is not preëminent in this field; that he is unquestionably our greatest essayist; and that he is one of the world's great ethical teachers. No educated American can afford to be unacquainted with the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

*Emerson's early life.* Emerson (1803-1882) was born in Boston, May 25, 1803. He was descended from a long line of New England ministers, his father, Reverend William Emerson, being minister at the First Unitarian Church in Boston at the time of Emerson's birth, and his grandfather of

the same name having been minister at Concord during the American Revolution. Emerson was graduated from Harvard College at the age of eighteen. It is said that he attracted no particular notice in college, but he made a good record and took some of the honors, being chosen as class poet and taking the second prize in the Boylston contest in English composition. Immediately after graduation he engaged in teaching, but in 1823 he returned to the divinity school of Harvard College and began studying definitely for the ministry. He was ordained in 1829 and was at once installed as assistant minister in the Second Unitarian Church of Boston. In this year he married Miss Ellen Tucker. She did not live long, however, and some years later Emerson was married to Miss Lydia Jackson, who bore him several children and made him a happy home at Concord. Emerson became full minister of the Second Church when his colleague resigned in 1829, and for over three years he served the church acceptably. In 1832 he began to have conscientious scruples about his fitness to commemorate the Lord's Supper, and on September 9 of that year he preached his farewell sermon and courageously resigned his pulpit.

*Emerson's lectures.* Thus thrown on his own resources for a livelihood, Emerson began to lecture and write. He visited Europe in 1833 and met many famous literary people, notably Wordsworth, Coleridge, Landor, De Quincey, George Eliot, and Cowper. On his return he settled in Concord (1834) and took up his residence at the famous old house known as the "Old Manse," where his grandfather, Reverend William Emerson, Sr., had lived, and where Hawthorne later took up his abode and wrote *Mosses from an Old Manse*. The correspondence between Emerson and Carlyle, begun at this period, extended to the death of Carlyle in 1881, and the series of letters between these two great masters is one of the most notable in all English and American literature. The lecture platform was Emerson's



RALPH WALDO EMERSON

pulpit from this time on. In fact, it was largely through Emerson that lyceum lecturing as a means of public entertainment and instruction was first brought into favor in this country. He had a marvelously sweet and appealing voice, and his fresh, vigorous, tonic messages attracted and inspired his audiences even when they did not fully understand the import of what he was saying.

"*Concord Hymn.*" On September 12, 1835, Emerson delivered at Concord a speech called "An Historical Discourse on the Second Centennial Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town," and when the monument commemorating the battle of Concord was dedicated on July 4, 1837, he was called upon to write a hymn for the occasion. The little poem which he produced, now known as "Concord Hymn," has since become one of the nation's poetical treasures. It has only four stanzas, but is complete and satisfying as a work of art. The first stanza is doubtless the most frequently quoted passage of Emerson's poetry.<sup>1</sup>

"*Nature.*" In 1836 Emerson's first book, *Nature*, appeared. It was a small volume of less than one hundred pages, but it was packed full of inspiration, idealism, and profound philosophy. It was written in a tense, poetical, rhapsodic prose style, and naturally it attracted very little popular attention. Holmes calls it a reflective prose poem. It sets forth ideas on nature similar to those expressed by Wordsworth in his poetry, and it is the seed-field for many of the transcendental ideas later developed by Emerson on nature, God, and the soul of man. The public was not ready for such a volume, and not more than five hundred copies of this really great book were sold within twelve years after its publication.

"*The American Scholar.*" Nevertheless, Emerson was now rapidly becoming a prominent figure in the intellectual life of New England. In 1837 he was asked to deliver the

<sup>1</sup> See the illustration with quotation on opposite page.



THE MINUTE MAN, CONCORD

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled.  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world."

oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, and he prepared for this occasion that notable address "The American Scholar." Lowell spoke of its delivery as an event "without former parallel in our literary annals," and Holmes said "this grand oration was our intellectual Declaration of Independence." In it Emerson defined the scholar as "Man Thinking," and declared "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands draws to a close." He discussed the education of the scholar by nature, books, and action, and laid down a noble scheme of the scholar's duties in the new age of independence and individualism. Holmes said in summarizing the effect of this wonderful oration: "Young men went out from it as if a prophet had been proclaiming to them 'Thus saith the Lord.' No listener ever forgot that address, and among all the notable utterances of the speaker it may be questioned if one ever contained more truth in language more like that of immediate inspiration."

*Emerson's "Essays."* The *Essays*, First Series, appeared in 1841, and the Second Series in 1844. Most of these essays were first given as lectures. One might think that the lecturer could have simplified and reduced his addresses into some formal order as he repeated them from time to time, but such is not the case with Emerson's essays. There is great compression of thought and condensation and precision of style in these compositions. It has been said that "he who runs may read," but this saying cannot be applied to Emerson's essays. One must stop and think, and think deeply, or else one will miss the best of Emerson's thought. No book in our literature is more worthy of one's close study and attention, and none will give the young mind such fine practice in interpretative mental exercise. In fact, Emerson is one of the most inspiring of all writers; it is said that he has made more thoughtful readers than has any other American writer. He is certainly a stimulating mental tonic, and

every ambitious youth should give his very best effort to the mastery of a few of the simpler pieces, and eventually



EMERSON'S HOME, CONCORD

should read all twenty-four of the essays in these two volumes. "Self-Reliance," "Behavior," "Heroism," and "Compensation" are perhaps the most stimulating for young readers, but there are many others almost if not quite as good, not only in the two volumes of *Essays*, but in the remaining prose works of Emerson.

*Emerson's other prose volumes.* Among the other prose books of Emerson are *Representative Men* (1850), *English Traits* (1850), *Conduct of Life* (1860), *Society and Solitude* (1870), *Letters and Social Aims* (1875). These are made up largely of lectures and essays similar in thought and style to the better known *Essays*. All through the years of his maturity Emerson had the habit of jotting down his thoughts in his *Journals*, and from this intellectual storehouse he drew material for his addresses and books. This wonderful

miscellaneous source book for the study of Emerson's thought and the development of his mind and character has now been published, and lovers of Emerson can delve in it at will.

*Emerson's prose style.* Emerson's style is unique. He said what he had to say in brilliant, epigrammatic sentences, often so condensed as to be almost unintelligible to the superficial reader. He had little smoothness or sweetness of style, though he possessed wonderful facility in turning epigrams and expressive phrases, and occasionally he rose to passages of majestic beauty and sublimity. He may be said to be weak in the architectural or combining and arranging power of style. He throws his brilliant sentences and paragraphs together in a vague sort of order. There is certainly not that smoothness in transition nor definiteness of paragraph topics that we now expect and demand of the average good prose stylist. He said himself that he sought no order or harmony of style in his writing. He speaks of his sentences as composed of "infinitely repellent particles." One often thinks of Emerson's essays as made up of rough piles of unhewn stones thrown together indiscriminately. In another place Emerson speaks of his "lapidary style," that is, the style of one who composes as if his sentiments were to be carved in stone. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his life of Emerson in the American Men of Letters Series, says: "Emerson's style is epigrammatic, incisive, authoritative, sometimes quaint, never obscure, except when he is handling nebulous subjects. His paragraphs are full of brittle sentences that break apart and are independent units, like the fragments of a coral colony. His imagery is frequently daring, leaping from the concrete to the abstract, from the special to the general and universal, and *vice versa* with a bound that is like a flight."

*Emerson as a poet.* As a poet Emerson has usually not been ranked high, but there are some who consider him



after all the truest of American poets. There is no use denying that he was a mediocre poetical craftsman in so far as mere technical excellences are concerned. His rhythm is often harsh and wabby, and his rimes are sometimes untrue and even impossible. There is little or no steady evolution of thought or largeness and finality of treatment in many of his poems; but in others, particularly some of the shorter ones, there are an artistic finish and a completeness and a perfection of expression that leave little to be desired. For the most part Emerson's better poetry is personal and self-revealing. We can understand Emerson the philosopher by studying the essays; but we can better comprehend Emerson the man by studying his poetry. It is true that a number of his poems deal with abstract philosophical truths, such as we find in the essays, and these will puzzle the most attentive reader unless by a previous acquaintance with the essays he is prepared to know what to expect. That Emerson was at bottom a real poet is no less evident in his best prose than in his best poetry. He took the office of poet seriously, declaring that he was naturally susceptible to the pleasures of rhythm and that he believed he would some day "attain to that splendid dialect." Eventually he almost always put his finest thoughts into rhythmic form. For example, once when he was taking a brief holiday at the seashore on Cape Ann, he wrote in his journal a passage of prose expressing his emotions in the presence of the ocean. When he returned to Concord, he read the passage over aloud and discovered that with a few slight changes the whole could be scanned as almost perfect blank verse. He immediately transcribed it in poetic form and added a few lines, thus completing the beautiful poem called "Seashore."

*Emerson's best poems.* Besides "Concord Hymn," which has already been mentioned, among the best of Emerson's shorter poems for the young reader are "Good-Bye,"

"The Rhodora," "The Humble Bee," "The Snow-Storm," "Give All to Love," "Each and All," "Fable" (sometimes called "The Mountain and the Squirrel"), "The Titmouse," and "Days." The longer poems are not such easy reading, for they are usually composed more in the manner of the essays, that is, they have little apparent organic or systematic evolution and ordering of parts. "May-Day" and "Woodnotes" are typical. They contain many beautiful passages, but they are disappointing as wholes. The poem called "Threnody," an elegy written in memory of Emerson's son who died at the age of about five years, will prove to be more satisfying because of its note of faith even in the poignancy of the poet's grief. Similarly, "Terminus," a poem written toward the close of Emerson's active career, sets forth the poet's cheerful optimism and calm dignity as he approached old age and death. The final stanza, which reminds one of the brave and optimistic outlook with which Browning greeted death, is well worth committing to memory:

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time,  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:  
"Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed;  
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,  
And every wave is charmed."

In "Voluntaries," a poem written during the Civil War, occurs the ringing appeal to youth to rally to the call of Freedom. The last quatrain of the third division of this poem is one of the finest examples of the ethical epigram to be found anywhere in English poetry:

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,  
The youth replies, *I can*.

*Emerson's last days: a final estimate.* Emerson died April 27, 1882, and was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery,



EMERSON'S GRAVE, SLEEPY HOLLOW

Concord, near the grave of Hawthorne. An immense boulder of unhewn rose quartz, typical of the combination of rough strength and native beauty in Emerson's genius, now marks his grave. In the latter part of his life his mind showed evidences of gradual decay. He ceased to produce anything of worth, and he forgot even the names of his friends. When Longfellow died (March, 1882), Emerson was carried to the funeral, and as he looked on the dead poet's face he was heard to remark, "That gentleman was a sweet, beautiful soul, but I have entirely forgotten his name." Emerson had long since done his best work. He had touched as with a tongue of fire the young and vigorous minds of America; he had declared for independence, self-trust, individualism in religion and art; he had expressed his own sense of the profound moral and ethical truths of

the universe in enduring form in both prose and verse. As Paul Elmer More declares in his recent essay on Emerson, "It becomes more and more apparent that Emerson, judged by an international standard or even by a broad national standard, is the outstanding figure in American letters."<sup>1</sup>

**Nathaniel Hawthorne.** Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), born in the seacoast town of Salem, Massachusetts, July 4, 1804, was descended from two generations of sea captains and from a long line of Puritan magistrates and warriors. Among his progenitors on his father's side were some who persecuted the Quakers and authorized the execution of witches in the celebrated Salem witchcraft delusion. It is said that the curse of one of the sufferers lingered like a black blot in the blood, and it has been suggested that the dark and gloomy cast of Hawthorne's genius was traceable to this ancestral source. His mother was a Manning, representing another distinguished Puritan family, and so we may certainly say that Hawthorne came naturally by that Puritan conscience of which he was to become the renowned artistic interpreter.

*Hawthorne's youth.* In the boy's fourth year his father died while away on a sea voyage, and his mother shut herself up from the world in a sort of lifelong grief. After several years she moved to the large Manning estates on Sebago Lake, Maine, and here Nathaniel lived from his ninth until his fourteenth year. As he afterwards declared, this was one of the bright periods in his rather gloomy and solitary early life. "I ran quite wild," he wrote, "and would, I doubt not, have willingly run wild till this time, fishing all day long, or shooting with an old fowling-piece; but reading a good deal, too, on the rainy days, especially

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<sup>1</sup>*Cambridge History of American Literature*, Vol. I, p. 349. The best known life of Emerson is that by Oliver Wendell Holmes in the *American Men of Letters Series* (1885). A good recent treatment is that by O. W. Firkins (1915).



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

in Shakespeare and *The Pilgrim's Progress*." This last book, together with another early favorite of Hawthorne's, Spenser's *Faërie Queene*, is significant as the source of his fondness for allegory in his own stories.

*His education.* His mother returned to Salem to seek means of education for her three children. She selected a tutor for Nathaniel, and within two years he was ready to enter Bowdoin College. Franklin Pierce, afterwards president of the United States, was one class ahead of Hawthorne, and Longfellow was in the same class, that of 1825. Hawthorne made a few close friendships, notably with Pierce and Horatio Bridge, the last named being his most intimate friend and the one who believed in him and had most influence in turning him toward authorship.

*Hawthorne's tales and sketches.* After graduation Hawthorne went back to Salem, where his mother still lived. And in "a solitary chamber under the eaves" of the house on Herbert Street, not far from where he was born, he developed through the next twelve years his powerful and original literary style. All the members of the family were seclusive in their habits. The two sisters kept to their rooms, the mother had her meals served in her separate apartment, and naturally in such a household Hawthorne developed to the fullest extent what he called his "cursed habit of solitude." He published anonymously an immature novel called *Fanshawe* in 1828, but he afterwards wished to withdraw it from circulation. He became extremely fastidious about the finish and style of his work, and it is said that during this period of his literary apprenticeship he wrote and rewrote and then burned many tales and sketches. He published a few pieces in *The New England Magazine* and in the early issues of *The Token*, a Boston annual; and under G. C. Goodrich's editorship of *The Token* he increased his contributions to this annual so that within a few years he had published enough stories to make up

the first edition of the happily christened *Twice-Told Tales* (1837). This volume was subsequently (1842) enlarged



THE GREAT STONE FACE

from eighteen to thirty-nine tales, and it has since held its place as one of the few permanent short-story collections in our literature. *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846) and *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1852) are similar collections. Except for the work of Poe and Irving nothing has yet appeared in our literature that can be compared with these tales for finish of style, literary art, and profound analysis of the various phases of human life. Part of them are mere sketches or essays, others are based on historical incidents, but most of them are works of pure fancy and imagination. Even when the skeleton or basal facts are historical, the real flesh and blood, the creative part of the story, is almost entirely imaginative and original. It is almost impossible to select the best of these stories for

special mention. Every critic of the volumes seems to light upon different ones as the best, and no two persons are found to agree. The following stories have met with general approval and certainly represent Hawthorne's art at its best: "The Birthmark," "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Great Stone Face," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "Young Goodman Brown," "The Great Carbuncle," "The Ambitious Guest," and "The Wedding-Knell."

*Hawthorne's love affair.* It was the publication of *Twice-Told Tales* that led to Hawthorne's acquaintance, and later engagement and marriage, with Miss Sophia Peabody. Elizabeth Peabody, the elder sister, became interested in the author of these exquisite short stories, and through her friendship with Hawthorne's sisters she invited him to call at her home. Here he met the youngest of the three sisters, Sophia, and even though she was something of an invalid at this time, her bright, well-trained mind and her artistic temperament—for she was gifted with brush and pencil—attracted the romancer from his social seclusion. Her beneficent influence caused the petals of his soul to expand like a flower in the spring sunshine. She was likewise attracted by his classic features and athletic physique as well as by the wonderful charm of his mind. Their love story, since given to the public in Hawthorne's letters, is one of the sweetest and happiest in the annals of literature. She gave him encouragement and stimulus and love, and he gave her life and home and happiness. Her health improved after her marriage, and three children were born to them, Una, Julian, and Rose.

*His life in the "Old Manse."* But when Hawthorne met Miss Peabody he was not able to support an invalid wife; so the engagement ran on for four years before the marriage took place in 1842. George Bancroft, in the meantime, used his influence to have Hawthorne appointed to the position





**THE OLD MANSE, CONCORD**

of weigher and gauger at the Boston Custom House. He labored at this, to him, unsavory task for two years, and then took his savings of one thousand dollars and invested them in the impractical social community of Brook Farm, a transcendental experiment in which physical labor and intellectual activities were to be alternately and equally enjoyed. The experiment proved a failure, of course, and Hawthorne lost his money. In spite of this serious loss, however, he determined now to marry. He took his wife to the Old Manse in Concord, the house already made famous by Emerson's residence in it, and now made doubly so by Hawthorne's occupancy; and there he began the long and desperate struggle of making a living by his pen. The story of these impecunious years has been fully told by the family letters, and the happy way in which the couple met their difficulties will always arouse interest. Once Mrs. Hawthorne, noticing a large rent in one of her husband's garments, remarked that it was strange they did not have more ready money, since her husband was a man of such large rents. She fairly worshiped him, and he was as devoted to her, and this made these years of poverty not only endurable but happy.

*"The Scarlet Letter."* Friends came to the rescue again, and Hawthorne was appointed collector, or surveyor, of the port of Salem. This gave him a better immediate income, but for a time cut off his literary productivity. He planned a larger work on the basis of some old records which he found in the office at Salem, but the work did not progress satisfactorily. When he announced his removal from office in 1849, Mrs. Hawthorne complacently remarked, "Oh, then you can write your book!" And when the distressed husband wanted to know what they could live on while it was being written, she disclosed a pile of gold coins which she had saved out of her weekly allowance for household expenses and hidden away for just such an emergency. The

book was written: it was *The Scarlet Letter*, by common consent designated as the one absolutely great masterpiece of fiction in all American literature. Hawthorne's friend, James T. Field, the publisher, came over from Boston toward the end of the year and found the germ of the manuscript already in shape, and in 1850 the enlarged romance was published. It took the public by storm and has ever since retained its position as the greatest American novel. The story is one of gloom and tragedy. It sets forth the gradual purification of one sinner through open confession and the slow torture of another through hypocritical concealment. Hester Prynne bears the scarlet letter A on her breast as a punishment for the sin of adultery, while the minister, Arthur Dimmesdale, the partner of her crime, conceals his guilt and suffers the tortures of the damned until, in the tragic climax of the story, he openly confesses his sin. One of the most beautiful of all Hawthorne's character creations is the innocent, fairy-like Pearl, the offspring of the unholy passion. The child adds a touch of haunting beauty to an otherwise gloomy and depressing tale.

"*The House of the Seven Gables.*" After the phenomenal success of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne's period of being what he called "the obscurest man of letters in America" was over. He moved to "the little red cottage" near Lenox in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, and here he wrote the second of his four great romances, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). Of all Hawthorne's longer works this one is by far the most attractive to young readers. The theme is the hereditary transmission of sin from generation to generation. The scene is laid in the familiar haunts of Salem, the very house with its seven gables being still pointed out to visitors as the original of Hawthorne's story. There is in the realistic portrayal of this quaint old New England town and some of its queer inhabitants a touch of humor which brightens up the somewhat somber coloring

of the romance; and the love story of Phoebe Pyncheon and Holgrave increases the interest and affords a satisfactory solution of the former enmity between the two families.



THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES, SALEM

*Juvenile books.* To the Lenox period belong also those delightful books for young readers, *The Wonder-Book* (1852) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853), both based on the old Greek and Roman hero myths. These stories are by no means mere mechanical reproductions of the old classical myths. Hawthorne allowed himself great freedom in his treatment, and found great pleasure in reminting through his own imagination these world-old fables. When we take into consideration these two volumes together with *Grandfather's Chair* (1841), a series of historical tales, and many other juvenile stories scattered through his earlier volumes of tales, such for example, as "The Snow Image" and "Little

Daffydowndilly," we are led to the conclusion that Hawthorne's contributions to our juvenile classics are very important.

"*The Blithedale Romance*." During 1852 Hawthorne moved his family to West Newton, a suburb of Boston, and here he produced his third great novel, *The Blithedale Romance*, reflecting largely his experiences at Brook Farm in Roxbury, not very far from West Newton. This is the least satisfactory of the four greater romances, but it contains among others one striking feminine character study, that of Zenobia, supposed to be based on that remarkable woman, Margaret Fuller Ossoli.

*Life abroad: "The Marble Faun."* Hawthorne had not yet found the home to suit him, and so he purchased the old house of the Alcotts in Concord near Emerson's residence, and christened it "The Wayside." Here, in 1852, he wrote a campaign life of his old college friend Franklin Pierce, who was now a candidate for the presidency. Naturally, upon being elected to the presidency, Pierce desired to reward his friend and supporter, and consequently he appointed Hawthorne to be consul at Liverpool. This was a lucrative position, and the income from the office, together with the increased returns from his books, put Hawthorne and his family above want for the remainder of his life. He did not enjoy the work nor the honors of his new position, but he went through the routine with the same punctilious devotion to duty that he had shown in his previous official positions. The literary results of this residence abroad were *Our Old Home, a Series of English Sketches*, published in *The Atlantic Monthly* some years later, and the fourth of his great romances, *The Marble Faun*, written at Rome and published in England under the title *The Transformed* in 1860. This is a rather mystical story and is not usually pleasing to young readers; but it contains many excellent descriptions of points of interest in

Rome, and much profound character study, particularly of the hero, Donatello, the young Italian who resembles the famous old marble statue of a satyr or faun which the author found in Rome.

*Hawthorne's later works.* After the appearance of *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne returned to his home in Concord. Here he attempted some further literary work, but his health was gradually giving way, and the old creative impulse was almost gone. He started several romances, among them *Septimus Felton*, *Dr. Grimshaw's Secret*, and *The Dolliver Romance*, but none of them was satisfactorily completed. Then in a vain search for health, he went on a carriage trip with Franklin Pierce through the mountain regions of New Hampshire. When they reached Portsmouth, his strength gave out and he died alone in his room in an inn, May 17, 1864. He was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, his grave being now marked with a plain marble headstone, not more than a foot high, bearing the simple inscription "HAWTHORNE."

*General estimate of Hawthorne's work.* Three things make Hawthorne's work great—first, the originality and spontaneity of his imaginative conceptions; second, the fundamental moral truth and spiritual purity underlying these conceptions; and third, the supreme artistry of the form of expression in which he has presented these conceptions. No writer in America has depended more absolutely and more consistently on his own ideas and instincts as to what material was best suited to his genius. Hawthorne's work is unique because his genius was unique and because he allowed it to mature slowly and naturally, without the intermixture of foreign elements or the distraction of foreign models. There is no English author with whom we care to compare him, for he was too original, too much himself to be like any one of them. In the second place, while he dealt with sin and the human conscience and some of the

darker aspects of life, he handled these problems with the utmost purity of conception. *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, deals with an abhorred sin, but there never was a purer book nor a more powerful appeal for Christlike charity toward those who have sinned and felt all the awful pangs of expiation and the final purification of character through repentance and steadfast resistance. So it is with all Hawthorne's works; there is not a word of sacrilege, nor a hint of encouragement to the evil-doer, nor a cause for a blush on the cheek of the purest-minded maiden. Finally, Hawthorne is a supreme artist. His manner of expression sits as naturally on him as his own features. There is no strut, no superficial veneer, no painfully evident striving after effect, no trick or artifice; on the contrary every word and phrase is as natural and easy and spontaneous as the conception which gave it birth. The picturesqueness, the vivid character portrayal, the music and rhythm of his prose cadences, the apt and precise diction, the dominant tone of spirituality, the suggestive other-worldliness—in short, the pure art of his prose style—all this undoubtedly places him in the first rank of American literary artists.<sup>1</sup>

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.** Whenever American poets are mentioned, the name that flashes at once into the mind at the head of the list is that of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882). Like Washington, but in a literary rather than in a political sense, he is "first in the hearts of his countrymen." He has produced a larger body of poetry than has any other of our poets, his poems are more familiarly read and quoted than are the works of any of our other writers, and he has been more widely translated and more prominently recognized abroad, particularly in England, as the most representative, if not the most original and powerful, of our poets.

<sup>1</sup>The best life of Hawthorne is by George E. Woodberry in the *American Men of Letters Series*. Henry James, Jr., has also written a brilliant criticism in the *English Men of Letters Series*.

*His youth and education.* Longfellow is the only one of the more distinguished New England men of letters born outside the present borders of Massachusetts; and Portland, Maine, his birthplace, was really a part of Massachusetts at the time of his birth, February 27, 1807. He was a student at Bowdoin College, and graduated in 1825 with Nathaniel Hawthorne and several other men who rose to prominence. Longfellow's father was a lawyer, and he had proposed to give his son a legal education after he finished college; but in his senior year the young man confessed in a letter to his father his aspiration for future eminence in literature. "Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing that if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of law."

*Longfellow's first period of European travel and study.* After graduation at Bowdoin, he had asked the privilege of spending a year in studying what was then called *belles-lettres*, or polite literature, at Harvard College. His father consented, but the trustees of Bowdoin College offered the young graduate a professorship in modern languages on the condition that he should go abroad for study at his own expense. His father furnished the money, and the prospective professor, then but nineteen, sailed for Europe. He spent three years studying the languages and literatures of France, Spain, Italy, and Germany. This contact with European literature and culture was the best possible preparation for his later work as a poet.

*His work as a teacher: second trip abroad.* He returned to Bowdoin and began his work as a teacher in 1829. He had not only to do all the work of directing his classes in the various foreign languages, but also to prepare elementary





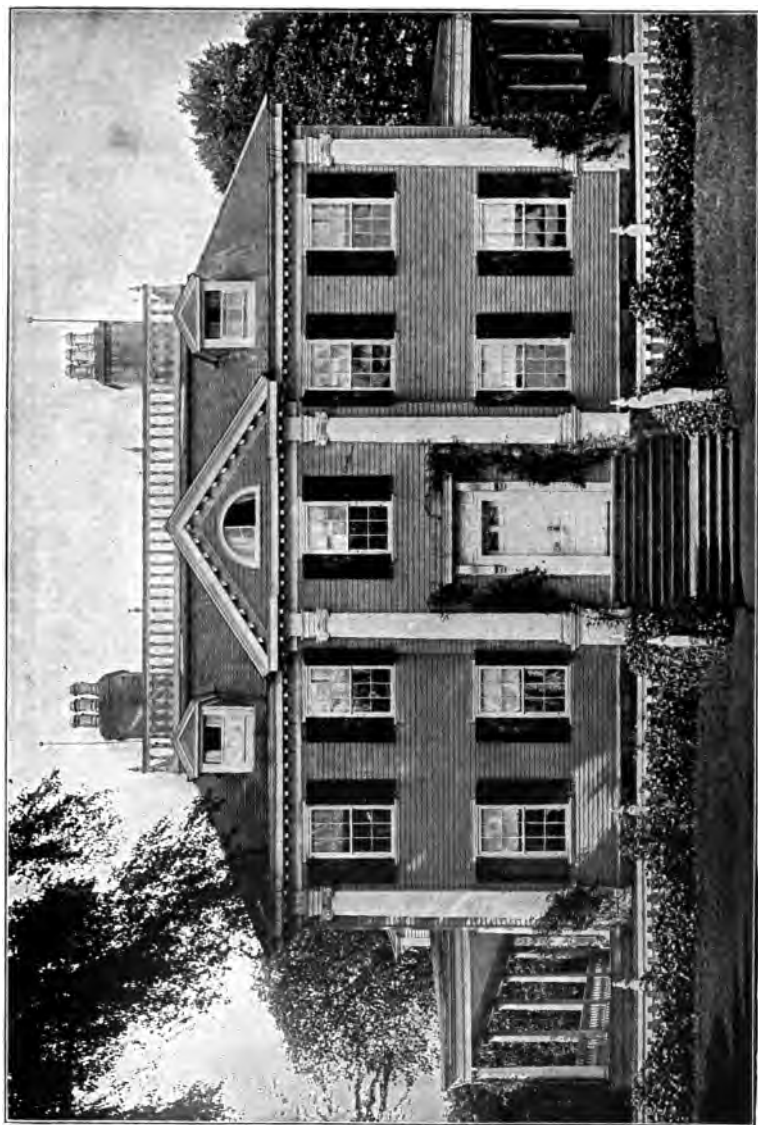
*From a painting by Healy in the possession  
of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts*

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

textbooks for the guidance of his pupils. He did his work well, and in 1834 he was called to succeed George Ticknor as Smith professor of French and Spanish at Harvard College. In April, 1835, he sailed again to Europe for another year and a half of study. In 1831 he had married Miss Mary Potter of Portland, and he took his wife with him. Her health was delicate, and she died in Rotterdam, Holland, some months later. She is fittingly commemorated in the poem called "Footsteps of Angels."

*His professorship at Harvard.* Partly to bury himself from his grief and partly in preparation for his future work at Harvard, the poet plunged into the study of German language and literature. He made good progress, and by the summer of 1836 he was ready to return to America to enter upon his professorship. When he went to Cambridge, he was directed to the home of Mrs. Craigie, who owned the famous old Craigie House where General Washington once had his headquarters during the Revolutionary War. Mrs. Craigie at first refused to accept him, thinking that he was a college student, but when she learned that he was the new professor and the author of *Outre Mer* she gave him rooms in her home. When Longfellow married Miss Frances Appleton in 1843, his father-in-law made them a present of Craigie House, which has since become a sort of literary shrine for pilgrims from all over the world. There Longfellow lived the remainder of his life. After eighteen years of service he resigned his professorship to James Russell Lowell, but he continued to live in Cambridge and take a lively interest in the affairs of the university.

*Longfellow's prose.* Longfellow's prose works are *Outre Mer*, "Beyond the Sea" (1833), a sort of imitation of Irving's *Sketch Book* with scenes drawn from France, Spain, and Italy; *Hyperion* (1839), a sentimentalized romance interspersed with German legends, translation, and bits of description; and *Kavanagh* (1849), a realistic novel of rural



CRAIGIE HOUSE, LONGFELLOW'S HOME AT CAMBRIDGE

New England life. These have been overshadowed by the greater popularity of his poetical works, but the last two in particular are well worth a perusal, especially while one is young. The style is perhaps too highly colored and the stories too sentimental for the more robust modern taste, but these works give Longfellow a right to a place in the history of American romantic prose.

*Longfellow's early poems.* The history of Longfellow's poetical production begins at least in his thirteenth year when the *Portland Gazette* published his "Battle of Lovell's Pond." He continued to write poetry from this time until his death in 1882. His first volume of verse, *Voices of the Night*, was published in 1839; in 1841 *Ballads and Other Poems* appeared; and in 1845, *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*. In the first of these volumes appeared such favorites as "A Psalm of Life," "The Light of Stars," "The Beleaguered City," and "Hymn to the Night"; in the second "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "Maidenhood," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Rainy Day," and "Excelsior"; in the third "The Bridge," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," and "The Arrow and the Song." Other volumes of poetry appeared from time to time, up to his death, but these have now all been included in his collected works and need not be mentioned separately here.

"*The Building of the Ship.*" The volume called *The Seaside and the Fireside* appeared late in 1849, the opening poem being "The Building of the Ship," Longfellow's chief contribution to our national patriotic poetry. It is a masterpiece of its kind, for it may be said of the poet as of the builder of the ship,

His heart was in his work,  
And the heart giveth grace unto every art.

Longfellow takes up the building of a ship from the planning to the final launching, and by a skilful introduction of a

dedicatory speech by the old master, makes an extended comparison of the whole with human life; and then, at the climax, rises to a magnificent conclusion in which he compares our government to a stately ship under sail, a passage which every one should memorize.

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!  
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!  
Humanity with all its fears,  
With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!  
We know what Master laid thy keel,  
What Workman wrought thy ribs of steel,  
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!  
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
'T is of the wave and not the rock;  
'T is but the flapping of a sail,  
And not a rent made by the gale!  
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee, — are all with thee.

"*Evangeline*." The enthusiastic and widespread reception accorded these early volumes led the poet to essay greater themes. His mind was steeped in European literature, but more and more he was turning to American life, legend, and history for his subjects. In 1847 appeared what is now recognized as one of the greatest of his works, *Evangeline*, the epic-idyl of the Anglo-French conflict for supremacy on the North American continent. We have no hesitancy in pronouncing *Evangeline* one of the supreme poetical treasures of our literature. Every American school child reads its

long, musical hexameters with pleasure and profit. The story is a beautiful one, and Longfellow has decorated it



*From the painting by Thomas Praed*

EVANGELINE

with many exquisite figures of speech, and much rich, native color and heart-moving sentiment. The haunting melody of the "deep-voiced neighboring ocean" and the "mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest"

linger in every ear as a sort of perpetual benediction. The characters, too, stand out in bold relief in our memories — the gentle and patient Evangeline, the restless and unsatisfied Gabriel, the heart-broken Benedict Bellefontaine, the faithful Father Felician, the fiery, stout-hearted Basil, and merry Michael the fiddler. All in all, *Evangeline* is the most successful narrative poem in our literature.

*Longfellow's other great narrative poems.* Other great narrative works followed, such as *Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). Some have pronounced *Hiawatha* the most original poetical contribution to our literature, and others have hailed it as the only truly American epic. It presents an idealized picture of the American Indian and is a wonderful storehouse of native myth and legend. Its peculiar trochaic octosyllabic rhythm, borrowed from the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, gives it an antique flavor, and its rich massing of Indian folklore helps to make it a perennial favorite with young readers. But in spite of its originality, its aboriginal American coloring, and its appealing beauty, we are inclined to rank it below *Evangeline* in artistic power and fundamental human appeal. *The Courtship of Miles Standish* is deservedly popular, though Longfellow does not seem to handle the hexameter in this happier-toned poem so well as he did in the more melancholy and solemn-toned *Evangeline*. It is interesting to know that Longfellow traced his ancestry on his mother's side back to John and Priscilla Alden, the hero and heroine of the romance in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. *Tales of a Wayside Inn* is modeled on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The characters gathered in the old inn at Sudbury near Cambridge are described in the Prelude very much as Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims are presented in the Prologue. The first of the tales, "Paul Revere's Ride," told by the landlord, has proved to be the most popular, though the poet's tale, at the end of the

first series, "The Birds of Killingworth," is more original, being one of the few stories of Longfellow's own invention.

*Longfellow's works in dramatic form.* Although Longfellow wrote some dramas, he did not possess a strong dramatic gift. *The Spanish Student*, a play in three acts, appeared in 1843. With a beautiful Spanish dancing girl as heroine and a dashing Spanish student as hero, one might think that the poet would have produced a good strong play; but such is not the case. It is a dramatic poem or closet drama rather than a good acting play. And so it is with Longfellow's other attempts at dramatization. *The Golden Legend* (1851), later included as the second part of the *Christus* trilogy, is in dramatic form, but it is merely a poem on an old German legend, interpreting rather beautifully some phases of medieval life. The other two parts of the *Christus*, namely, *The New England Tragedies* (1868) and *The Divine Tragedy* (1872), are now ranked as practical failures in spite of the high estimate which the poet put upon this work of his later years. *The Masque of Pandora* is another dramatic work. It was put on the stage in Boston in 1881, but it failed to attract audiences.

*His translation of Dante.* The last large work done by Longfellow was his excellent translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. He had contemplated this task for some years and had done something on it, but it was not until after the death of his wife that he set himself seriously to complete the translation. He finally published it in 1870, prefixing to each of the three parts two original sonnets of surpassing beauty. The personal reference to the loss of his wife in the first of these sonnets is particularly pathetic. Her dress caught fire, and before her husband could put out the flames she was burned so badly that she died within a short time.

*His last visit to Europe: later honors.* Longfellow made his last visit to Europe in 1868. He was received everywhere with



enthusiasm. In England he met many celebrated literary and public men, was invited to dine with the queen, and was



*From a painting by A. Fredericks*

PRISCILLA AND JOHN ALDEN

given an honorary degree by Cambridge University. It is said that his works were as well known in England as Tennyson's, and naturally the masses of the people, as well as the notable persons, were glad to welcome one who had given them so much pleasure. And at home he was similarly

honored. On his seventy-second birthday, the Cambridge school children presented to him a chair made from the wood of "the spreading chestnut tree" of "The Village Blacksmith" fame, and the schools of the whole country celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. He died on March 24, 1882, and was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Longfellow is the only American poet who has been honored with a memorial in the Poet's Corner<sup>1</sup> in Westminster Abbey.

*A general estimate of Longfellow.* We usually say that Longfellow is the most popular of our poets, and yet he is not an American of the most characteristic type. He lived in an academic atmosphere all his life, and he represented the older European culture more than he did the fresh, vigorous American life. He knew books and life through books better than he knew men and life through actual contact with the busy world. But he was by no means a recluse; in fact, he was conspicuously generous in giving his time and personality to the entertainment of Americans and foreigners who sought him out. And it is said that his doors were never closed against the children. But after all, he spent his life largely amid books—writing, teaching, reading, absorbing the literatures of many nations. He felt deeply, but not passionately, and he controlled his emotions perfectly, both in life and in his poetry. He was no eager reformer or wild devotee burning with the white heat of enthusiasm and passion, but a calm, sober-minded, peace-loving, home-loving bard. "Although he is not necessarily among the twelve greatest poets of the world, he is incontestably a great benefactor and a great man."

*An answer to Longfellow's critics.* During recent years

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<sup>1</sup>The Longfellow bust was subscribed for by the poet's English admirers in 1884. A few years later a fine medallion in honor of James Russell Lowell as American Minister to the Court of St. James was placed in the Chapter House of the Abbey, the room in which the House of Commons met from 1282 to 1547.



THE POET'S CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

there has been a tendency among some of the more sophisticated critics to speak slightly of Longfellow's genius. They accuse him of being over-moral, sentimental, simple, commonplace, unimagative. They admit the popularity and power of his work so far as the general public is concerned, but they immediately dodge behind the insinuating query, "Is it art?" To all such critics we reply that to touch the hearts of a whole people, to inspire youth and comfort age, to express the profoundest ideals of the individual and the national life in pleasing and enduring literary form is art of the only kind worthy of attention. It is to be hoped that the time will not soon come when American youths shall be robbed of the pleasure and inspiration that come to them from reading the simple, heart-moving poems of Henry W. Longfellow.<sup>1</sup>

**John Greenleaf Whittier.** John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) has been called "The Poet Laureate of New England," "The Quaker Poet," "The Burns of America." Any one of these titles may be aptly applied to him, but perhaps the first is most suggestive of his real service to American literature. He is called the Burns of America because, like the Scotch poet, he was born on a farm and reared amid the usual isolation and hardships incident to farm life in his day, and because, like Burns, he wrote most successfully about the things immediately connected with this rural life into which he was born. But he lacked the Scotch singer's alertness for things of sense, his fiery passion, his keen ear for music, and hence in lyric power he falls far below the peasant bard. He is called the Quaker poet because he voiced the deepest religious moods of that particular sect. He was born a Quaker, and clung to this quiet, self-denying

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<sup>1</sup>The standard life of Longfellow is that by his brother, Samuel Longfellow. This three-volume book contains a great many letters and extracts from Longfellow's Journals, and is a storehouse of information about the poet. A good short life of Longfellow is that by E. S. Robertson in the *Great Writers Series*.



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

form of religion throughout his life. He inherited from his ancestors that strict conscience and deeply religious nature which he poured forth in his hymns and moral odes. In fact, his sense for morality was so strong that it not infrequently overshadowed and obscured what little instinct he possessed for pure art. But above all he was, and is still, the poet laureate of New England life. He has taken the local legends and ballads and enshrined them in permanent art forms. He has painted the most perfect pictures of the rigid New England climate, and of the exquisite New England rural landscape, its hills and valleys, its fields and flowers, its coasts and rivers. He has given the most accurate portraits of the native New England population in all the simplicity, purity, and charm of that unsophisticated class of which he was himself a member.

*The Whittier household.* Whittier was born December 17, 1807, near East Haverhill, a small country village in north-east Massachusetts. He has given us in "Snow-Bound" a broad, sweeping winter picture of his birthplace, the old homestead built by his early Puritan ancestor, Thomas Whittier; and a minutely drawn summer picture of the same spot in "Telling the Bees" and other personal poems. All the members of the family are mentioned and faithfully drawn in "Snow-Bound"—the father and mother, John Whittier and Abigail Hussey, Uncle Moses Whittier, Aunt Mercy Hussey, the brother, Matthew Franklin Whittier, and the two sisters Mary and Elizabeth. Besides these, one of the village schoolmasters, George Haskell, and Miss Harriet Livermore, that "half-welcome guest," are also included in the family circle of the particular week when the family were snowbound.

*Whittier's early school life.* Whittier's boyhood and early surroundings are interesting because they show what can come out of many a country home where there are energy and perseverance and ambition in the hearts of boys and

girls similarly situated. The school advantages were meager. Only a few months in the year were the children privileged to attend the district school. There were few books in the homes, but the few in the Whittier household were mostly well-chosen religious books. John Greenleaf made the best of his opportunities for an education, however, and he learned much that was valuable to him, both in school and on the farm. He showed at an early age his propensity for poetry, making on his slate rimes on the people he knew and the books he read. One of his teachers, Joshua Coffin, later immortalized in the poem "To my Old Schoolmaster," one day read to the Whittier family some of Burns's songs. The lad was enchanted. So eager was he for more of this delightful Scotch verse that the teacher offered to leave the volume with him for a few days. He conned the hard Scotch dialect until he could read it with ease, and from that time on he felt that he, too, wanted to become a poet. In a later poem on Burns he acknowledges his debt.

New light on home-seen Nature beamed,  
New glory over Woman;  
And daily life and duty seemed  
No longer poor and common.

*His first published poem.* After school time the boy was put to work at the hard tasks of the farm, but he was not particularly strong, and once he injured himself, so that thereafter he was not expected to undertake the very heaviest tasks. He took up the trade of making shoes, and this enabled him a little later on to earn part of his expenses for a term in the Haverhill Academy. He had been writing more or less ambitious verse ever since the volume of Burns fell into his hands. His elder sister Mary thought some of his efforts worthy of being printed, and so, without her brother's knowledge, she sent one of them, "The Exile's Departure," to *The Newbury Free Press*, a weekly journal

of which the young William Lloyd Garrison, who afterwards became a famous leader of the abolitionists, was the editor.



WHITTIER'S BIRTHPLACE, HAVERHILL

The verses were accepted, and when his sister showed him his composition in print in the poets' corner, he was so overcome with emotion that for some minutes he could not go on with the task of fence mending in which he was at the moment engaged. He admitted in later years that no keener pleasure ever came into his life.

*Completing his education.* Fortunately for him, the young editor of the *Free Press* sought him out, asked for more contributions, and urged his parents to send the boy off to the newly established Academy at Haverhill. The father objected, for he did not think there was much in education and literature so far as making an honest living was concerned; but the good mother joined in the persuasions, and the boy was permitted to go to school provided he would earn his way. He went into Mr. Garrison's home, and by



means of money earned in making slippers at twenty-five cents a pair, he paid the extra expense for his first term in the Academy. He spent one other term in this school, earning the money this time partly by teaching and partly by clerical work. And this was the extent of his formal education. He never would have been the educated man he became, however, had he not been a great reader and had he not kept up his studies practically all his life. Every one of the other prominent New England writers went to college, and all except Thoreau had the advantage of travel in Europe; but Whittier never saw inside a college during his youth, and never quite managed to fulfill his desire for a trip to Europe. He lived and died in New England, rarely putting his foot outside his native section.

*Whittier's attachment to the cause of abolition.* It is needless to follow minutely the political and journalistic career of Whittier. Suffice it to say that early in life he attached himself to what was then an *unpopular* cause,—namely, the abolition of slavery,—and he devoted his best talents to this cause through thick and thin. He gave up his hope for political preferment by espousing this cause. He believed it to be a righteous one, and he was doubtless happier in his poverty and political neglect than he could possibly have been as United States senator, an office to which he might well have aspired had he been willing to turn his back on the cause of abolition. Whittier wrote many articles, published many anti-slavery poems, edited several journals, and did much real service for the cause by his shrewd political management and his untiring devotion to the mean and exacting drudgery of a movement like the one in which he had centered his whole being.

*Whittier's final success.* During these years he was barely able to make a living; his wants were simple, however, and he did not care for wealth or preferment. He never married, and so he had but a small family to care for, namely, his

mother and younger sister, Elizabeth. He said that he managed to live in spite of the fact that practically all of the literary channels were closed to him on account of his attachment to an unpopular cause. Just prior to and after the Civil War, however, when the cause for which he had so long battled became popular and finally triumphed, he came into his own, and the very best literary magazines were open to him. *The Atlantic Monthly* under the editorship of James Russell Lowell and James T. Field was particularly favorable to him, and he published many of his best poems in this magazine. His works became so popular after the publication of "Snow-Bound" in 1866 that he was enabled to live in comfort, though not in luxury, during the remainder of his life. He had given up his old homestead near East Haverhill many years before, and had moved to Amesbury, a town not many miles away, and here he spent the latter half of his life. Just about the time of his death (September 7, 1892), the old homestead near Haverhill was purchased and refurnished as nearly as possible in the style of the days of his youth, and it is now open to visitors from all over the country.

*Classification of his poetry.* Whittier's poetry may be discussed in these three groups: (1) his slavery and war-time poems, or "Voices of Freedom"; (2) his New England poems, including his incomparable idyls, his reflective and religious poems, his songs of labor, his nature lyrics, and his personal poems; (3) his narrative verse, including the ballads, most of which are lit up with New England coloring.

*His poems on slavery.* The slavery and war-time poems were the most cherished products of his pen before, during, and immediately after the terrible war which finally settled the question of slavery. The best of these are "Ichabod," a bold piece of invective, written more in sorrow than in anger, on the occasion of the defection of Daniel Webster from the cause of abolition; "Barbara Frietchie," sometimes

ranked as the best ballad of the Civil War, but a poem marred by an unjust allusion to the great Confederate leader, "Stonewall" Jackson; "Massachusetts to Virginia," a violent and powerful outburst against the fugitive slave law; and "Laus Deo," a magnificent paean of gratitude and praise upon the passage of the constitutional amendment forever abolishing slavery from our country.

*The New England poems.* The second class of poems, the New England group, really gives Whittier a high rank among our American singers and justifies his appellation of "Poet Laureate of New England." The masterpiece among these is "Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl," the almost perfect picture of the New England rural home. If he had written nothing else, this one poem would give him a just claim to literary fame. The scenes are vividly described, the portraits are wonderfully clear-cut and distinct, the moral tone is strong and sincere, and best of all, the very atmosphere of home seems to breathe from every line of the poem. As Professor Carpenter justly observes, "He, this old man who had been an East Haverhill boy, describes *his* homestead, *his* well-sweep, *his* brook, *his* family circle, *his* schoolmaster, apparently intent on naught but the complete accuracy of his narrative, and lo! such is his art that he has drawn the one imperishable picture of that bright winter life in that strange clime." Other familiar poems similar in style, but not approaching "Snow-Bound" in beauty or completeness, are "Maud Muller," "Mabel Martin," "The Barefoot Boy," "My Playmate," "In School-Days," and the Prelude to "Among the Hills." The purely personal and occasional poems and the nature lyrics are too numerous to be mentioned except by bare examples, such as "The Poet and the Children," referring to Longfellow's seventy-fifth birthday celebration, "The Trailing Arbutus," "The Frost Spirit," "The Last Walk in Autumn." There are over five hundred closely printed double-columned pages in his collected works,

and at least half of the volume belongs distinctly in what I have called the New England poems, and this is the cream of Whittier's poetry. In fact, Whittier, like Milton in the days of the Commonwealth, was so burdened with a great political cause during all his early years that he could not produce really great poetry. The poems written after he reached middle age are by far the best products of his life; the very highest work of his genius was given to the world after he was fifty-nine.

*Whittier's narrative poems.* In narrative verse, Whittier's first serious effort was to save the rich mine of legend and romance which he saw at his hand in the records of early New England history. His volume *Legends of New England in Prose and Verse* (1831) is largely narrative in character. Another poem with an Indian hero, "Mogg Megone," Whittier later classed as a stiff, unnatural sort of poetical performance. *The Tent on the Beach* contains many poems, almost all of them narrative in character. "Among the Hills" may also be classed in this category. The number of Whittier's ballads is large, including such favorites as "Barclay of Ury," "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "Telling the Bees," "Cobbler Keezar's Vision," "Amy Wentworth," and "King Solomon and the Ants." It has been said that Whittier is our truest ballad writer, not even excepting Longfellow. If not so swift in action nor so perfect in imitative tone, Whittier's ballads are truer to locality and more thoroughly native than Longfellow's.<sup>1</sup>

**Oliver Wendell Holmes.** If Lowell is our chief critical essayist and Emerson our greatest philosophical thinker, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) is no less surely to be classed with Irving as one of our two greatest informal essayists. We think of Holmes first as a humorist and the

<sup>1</sup>The standard *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* is that by Samuel T. Pickard, his kinsman and literary executor, who has also written a delightful additional volume called *Whittier Land*. A good brief biography is that by George Rice Carpenter in the *American Men of Letters Series*.



*From an engraving*

author of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, that unique book of informal, chatty talks or essays. But he is also a poet, if not of the very first rank among our American authors, certainly very near to it, for two or three of his lyrics, as well as much of his inimitable humorous poetry, will bear comparison with the best of their kind. Moreover, he is the most human, the most intimately personal, and the most consistently optimistic of all the New England school, and hence he is the favorite author of thousands of readers who would not think of classing his poetry or even his prose as the greatest produced in America. Though he was not autocratic in his disposition, we may call him the beloved "Autocrat" of American literature.

*The span of his life.* Holmes was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 29, 1809, just two years later than Longfellow and Whittier, in the same year with Poe and Lincoln, and ten years earlier than Lowell and Whitman. He outlived practically all of his literary contemporaries, being literally "the last leaf on the tree." He died in 1894, two years later than Whittier and Whitman, twelve years later than Longfellow and Emerson, and forty-two years later than Edgar Allan Poe. It seems almost unbelievable that Poe, who was born in the same year as Holmes, had been dead eight years before Holmes began his famous "Autocrat" papers in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

*His ancestry.* He was descended from what he called the "Brahmin caste" of New England, on both sides of the house. His father, Abiel Holmes, the pastor of the First Congregational Church of Cambridge, traced his line of descent even beyond the John Holmes who came from England to Connecticut in 1686. His mother, Sarah Wendell, was the daughter of Oliver Wendell of Boston, for whom the poet was named, and she was directly connected with the Dudleys, Bradstreets, Quincys, and other distinguished New England families. These facts are mentioned because

Dr. Holmes himself thoroughly believed in heredity and had much to say about it in his works.

*Holmes's education.* His education was the best to be had in America in his day. After a few years in an elementary school, he went to Phillips Academy, Andover, and from there he entered Harvard College in 1825, the year that Longfellow and Hawthorne graduated at Bowdoin College in Maine. He was already a skilled versifier, having made a metrical translation of Vergil's *Aeneid* when he was at Andover, and he was selected as class poet. "The famous class of '29" has become so partly because a number of distinguished men came from it, but largely from the fact that Holmes was its poet and for nearly a half century read delightful poems at the annual class reunions. After graduation Holmes said that he flirted with Blackstone and Chitty for a year in anticipation of becoming a lawyer, but his scientific turn of mind led him finally to decide in favor of medicine. After studying in Boston for a short time, he went abroad and spent two years, mostly in Paris, in preparation for his profession. He visited England, Italy, and Switzerland before his return in 1835, and the next year he took his degree at Harvard Medical College. He located at Boston, the city which he loved devotedly and which he once playfully called "the hub of the solar system," and when he prepared to hang out his professional sign he characteristically proposed to write beneath his name the motto, "Small fevers thankfully received."

*Holmes as a scientific man.* Holmes did not like the emotional strain of the sick room and operating table, but he was an enthusiastic investigator and a careful observer of the science of medicine. He was gradually building up a practice, but he rather joyfully relinquished it for the most part, when, in 1847, some years after a short incumbency in the same chair at Dartmouth College, he was elected professor of anatomy and physiology at Harvard. He

held the position thirty-five years as professor and twelve more years as professor *emeritus*, and during all the time of his active duties he was considered the most popular lecturer in the Harvard Medical College. Although Holmes was not a profound scientist, he was an ingenious man, and he perfected several mechanical devices of a scientific character, among them the stereoscope, that popular and entertaining little binocular device by which pictured objects are made to stand out almost as distinctly as they do in real life.

*His home life.* In 1840 he married Miss Amelia Lee Jackson, who proved to be an ideal mate for a man like Dr. Holmes. She encouraged and helped him and protected him in many ways, so that he was enabled to do the work that he was born for. They had three children, all of whom lived to maturity, and Mrs. Holmes herself lived to within a few years of the poet's death. In the atmosphere of his companions he was always happy. He was a charming conversationalist both at home and in public. It is said that he was the life of every social group in which he appeared.

*Holmes's lyrics.* Holmes's poetical work falls into two classes—his serious lyrics and his humorous and occasional pieces. He wrote three or four supremely excellent lyrics, and upon these his poetic fame chiefly rests—"Old Ironsides," "The Last Leaf," "The Chambered Nautilus," and "The Voiceless." He composed some longer serious poems, such as "The Rhymed Lesson," otherwise called "Urania," and "Wind Clouds and Snow Drifts," and "Grandmother's Story of the Battle of Bunker Hill," a spirited piece of narrative verse. "The Last Leaf" and "The Chambered Nautilus" deservedly rank among the very finest lyrics in the language. No collection is complete without them, and they are always found among the chief decorative gems of every anthology or golden treasury of American songs. One of the most frequently quoted passages in all American poetry is the last stanza of "The Chambered Nautilus."



*Holmes's humorous and occasional verse.* It is his humorous and occasional verse that, after all, gives Holmes his distinctive place in our memory. Here he is perfectly natural and spontaneous. Lowell correctly characterized Holmes as

"A Leyden jar always full charged, from which flit  
Electrical tingles of hit after hit."

The mere mentioning of such titles as "The Deacon's Masterpiece," "The Height of the Ridiculous," "Contentment," "My Aunt," and the like, arouses humorous sensations of a delightful kind. Holmes had a way of giving these light and whimsical humorous pieces a more universal and lasting quality than such literature usually attains. His Harvard class poems are full of fun and good fellowship, and his local and occasional poems are the best that we have of their kind; but they will doubtless be read less and less as time goes on, for occasional poetry inevitably fades with age. Some of the best of Holmes's poems read at the annual reunions of the class of 1829 are "The Boys" (1859), "Bill and Joe" (1868), and "The Shadows" (1880).

*Holmes and "The Atlantic Monthly."* It was in 1857 that Holmes attained permanent fame. In this year *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded, and Holmes was engaged to write for it regularly. He suggested the name of the new magazine, and it is not too much to say that it was his contributions that largely gave this periodical its dominant character and its immediate popular hold on the public. We must give Lowell the credit, however, for making it a contingent condition of his editorship that Holmes should write for the magazine, and not the least of Lowell's services in furthering American literature was the stimulus he gave Holmes, whom, as the latter shrewdly said, he woke "from a kind of literary lethargy." Lowell later said that Holmes was a "sparkling mountain stream which had been dammed up and was only awaiting an outlet into the *Atlantic*."

*The Breakfast Table series.* A book that is as surely marked for immortality as any single volume in our literature is *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, or Every Man His Own Boswell*. It is a series of what William Dean Howells called "dramatized essays," with a fairly thick sprinkling of poems, serious and humorous, to add variety to the Autocrat's dramatic monologues. The subtitle indicates that Holmes is really writing the history of his own thoughts, showing us just how his own mind works. The three volumes which make up the Breakfast Table series, *The Autocrat* (1858), *The Professor* (1859), and *The Poet* (1871), together with the belated *Over the Teacups* (1888), which really belongs in the same group, certainly give us a most satisfying portrait of the genial Autocrat's mind. There is in these books much real intellectual pabulum, but certainly no formal philosophy. Holmes was simply giving us the best observations he had been able to make on life. "Talk about those subjects you have had long in your mind," he said, "and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber should not be much used till they are seasoned." And again when he was asked how long it took him to write the Autocrat papers, he replied that it took him all his life up to the time he wrote them down. The easy conversational tone, the vividly drawn character sketches, the clear thought, the scintillating wit and delightfully good-natured humor, the unbounded optimism, and the uncompromising hostility toward tyranny, narrowness, and sham, make the whole Autocrat series one of the few really original contributions to nineteenth-century literature. *The Autocrat* is undoubtedly the best of the series, because it was the first, and because it contains the cream of Holmes's spontaneous wit and humor. The other three volumes are all worth reading, and some discerning critics have said that, though more serious and subdued in tone, they are

not less entertaining to the thoughtful reader. *The Autocrat* more than likely, however, has a hundred readers to one for any of the other volumes. It is a book to be dipped into, to be taken up at odd moments when one wants to hear a genial, witty, healthy personality talk for his own and his reader's amusement and profit. It is true that the slight thread of romance developed between the Autocrat and the timid schoolmistress leads one to read steadily through the last four papers; but after one perusal, the book is to be glanced at for pure pleasure rather than read straight through.

*Holmes's novels.* In *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, Holmes had introduced a more prominent romantic thread to his series of talks. This led him to write his first novel, *Elsie Venner* (1861). Two other novels followed, *The Guardian Angel* (1867) and *A Mortal Antipathy* (1888). Like the Autocrat series these were first published serially in *The Atlantic Monthly*. Holmes called them "medicated novels," because they are more or less concerned with problems pertaining to the science of medicine. The first deals with the experiences of Elsie Venner, who was endowed with peculiar powers of serpentine fascination and hypnotic influence because of the bite of a rattlesnake suffered by her mother just before Elsie was born. *The Guardian Angel*, said to be the most artistic of the three, deals with the problem of heredity; and *A Mortal Antipathy* traces the cause, growth, and cure of a certain man's strong antipathy to the feminine sex. As works of fiction, these novels do not rise above mediocrity, but, like everything that Holmes put his hand to, they are well written and deserving of at least a cursory perusal.

*His two biographies.* The last field in which Holmes employed his gift for authorship was in biography. He wrote *A Memoir of John Lothrop Motley* (1879) and *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1884). These are excellent and

painstaking works. It seems strange that Holmes should have been attracted to such a profound and dignified personality as Emerson's, but when we examine into Holmes's real philosophy of life, we find that it is not altogether unlike Emerson's. At any rate Holmes produced a remarkably sympathetic and illuminating study of the great thinker, essayist, and poet.

*His trip to Europe.* In 1886 Holmes took a pleasure trip to Europe, which he presented in his happy, personal style in *Our Hundred Days in Europe*. He was accorded many honors by the cities and universities which he visited. He received honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh. At Cambridge the students welcomed him with some cleverly adapted new words to an old song, the title of which was "Holmes, Sweet Holmes"; and with this phrase on our ears we may close our study of this delightful author.<sup>1</sup>

**Henry David Thoreau.** One of the effects of the transcendental movement was to send men back to nature. The most distinguished spirit of this movement was Emerson, whose first book was entitled *Nature*. But the man who went farthest into the real mysteries of nature was Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). We look upon him now as the pioneer and perhaps still the greatest of the large school of nature writers which has sprung up in recent years. His friend William Ellery Channing happily called him the poet-naturalist. He was, indeed, in spirit a poet as well as a naturalist, and he recorded much of his early thought in verse form; but in later years he expressed himself entirely in prose, and he is now chiefly valued as an original and striking prose stylist, who conscientiously and lovingly portrayed the varied aspects of nature in and around his native village of Concord, Massachusetts.

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<sup>1</sup>The standard biography of this author is *The Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* by J. T. Morse.

*Thoreau's early life at Concord.* Thoreau was the son of John Thoreau, a descendant of a French family which had



HENRY D. THOREAU

settled on the island of Jersey, and Cynthia Dunbar, a spritely woman of Scotch descent. He was born at Concord, July 12, 1817. Both his parents had been reared at Concord, and the family seems to have taken deep root in this consecrated

soil. Henry could not bear to think of living in any other place. Emerson, Hawthorne, Channing, the Alcotts, and other notable literary persons lived here, but none of them was so thoroughly attached to the soil, so much a natural outgrowth of it as was Thoreau, and none has so faithfully and lovingly preserved the external features and the spiritual atmosphere of the region round about. He seemed to be a part of nature in this particular spot. For a few years during his early childhood his parents went to seek their fortune in other places near by, but they came back to Concord in time for Henry to get his common-school education there. Then he was sent to Harvard College, and by the combined financial help of the members of his family he was enabled to graduate in 1837. So little did he value the diploma and so much was economy necessary that he refused to pay the five-dollar fee necessary to secure the formal certificate of his graduation. He engaged in teaching for a few years, finding a place in his native town to test his ability in this capacity; but his refusal to continue the practice of administering corporal punishment led to his withdrawal from the business of keeping school. He then took up his father's business of pencil-making, and by working industriously he soon mastered the secrets of this peculiar occupation. With that eccentricity for which he had already become noticeable, he announced that he would make no more pencils, since he did not care to do again what he had once learned to do well. He decided that the best thing a man could do was to learn to live simply and economically, avoiding much of the unnecessary frippery and luxury of modern life. He thought that most people spent entirely too much time making a living and entirely too little in really living. "A man is rich," he said, "in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone." If any friend proposed that Thoreau should embark in some enterprise, he was ready to reply that he

had already embarked in a permanent business venture, that of living his own life in his own way.

*His simple method of life.* Of course he had to work part of the time to earn the actual means of subsistence, but he accepted Carlyle's doctrine that the chief way to satisfy one's desires was to "reduce the denominator of life's fraction." He estimated that he could earn enough in one day's labor to subsist for a week, and he proportioned his own time in just about this ratio between manual labor and quiet observation, meditation, and loitering in the presence of wild nature. He was by no means idle during these experiences in the fields and forests and on the lakes and streams, for he was continually studying nature and recording his own thoughts and impressions. His manual labor was of varied kinds—gardening, carpentry, fence-building, but primarily surveying. He once jocularly quoted Cowper's poem on Alexander Selkirk,

"I am monarch of all I *survey*,"

and he summarized his occupations by saying that his steadiest employment was to keep himself in the top of condition so as to be ready for anything that might turn up on earth or in heaven. He began to lecture with more or less regularity after the lyceums came into vogue, but he was never a great favorite in this field.

*Thoreau's personality.* Thoreau never married. He was too much centered in the development of his own inner life, too sanely self-mastering, too passionless to become enmeshed in the ties of sentiment or domestic life, and it is perhaps well that he did not marry. It is certainly unjust to him, however, to say that he was cold and indifferent in his domestic relations. He was devoted to his brother and sisters and to his parents, he was exceedingly fond of children, and he was kind and helpful to the oppressed who came under his notice. But he was not personally magnetic,

he made few intimate friends, and he did not possess a universal sympathy like that of Walt Whitman, for example. He was rather a man who sought out the secrets of his own nature and mind and made a strict record of the findings, than one who opened his heart to the world around him. Some one suggested that he must love *man* since he loved all *animals*, but it is perhaps true that Thoreau preferred the companionship of the furred and feathered animals. He once wittily remarked that he would rather listen to the *chic-a-dee-dees* than the *D. D's*. Emerson very correctly called him a "Bachelor of Nature."

*Thoreau and Emerson.* For several years Thoreau was an inmate of Emerson's home at Concord. He was a sort of adopted elder brother and helped to earn his keep by working around the house and in the garden, and by tutoring in a sort of way, Emerson's children. He studied nature and oriental literature, talked philosophy with Emerson, opening the elder writer's eyes to many beauties and secrets of nature, and he developed normally and naturally. The period of his residence with Emerson was an important one in Thoreau's life, for he was beginning to find himself and to follow implicitly the promptings of his own instincts.

*Thoreau's residence in the woods near Walden Pond.* It was about this time that he decided to go to the woods and live alone in order to let his genius ripen. Emerson owned a piece of land on Walden Pond near Concord, and here Thoreau "squatted." He tells us in his book *Walden, or Life in the Woods* how he borrowed Ellery Channing's axe, cut down the trees for the frame of his house, built his hut at a remarkably low expense, and set up housekeeping in the woods. He planted beans and potatoes, intending to live as far as possible on his own products and the fish he could catch in the ponds and streams. Here he became familiar with the beasts and birds of the forest and even the fishes of the lake. He recorded every item which his



keen eye and clear mind observed. He set down day by day and season by season every detail about the plants and animals and birds and fishes. He was developing his soul by studying wild life and recording his own minutest thoughts and emotions. He did not go out to prove that a man could live the simple life entirely separated from his fellows; he did not go out to prove that a hermit's life was better than ordinary social life; he did not even want people to imitate his way of living. What he did want to do was to give his soul room to expand, to find out what he could best do with his endowment of mind and heart and eye, to study wild life closely and on equal and friendly terms, and to make a full and frank personal record of his observations and inner experiences. In all this he succeeded, and his success has given the public a new view of nature, a new inspiration for simple, sincere living.

*Thoreau's first published volume.* Thoreau went to Walden Pond in 1845 and returned to his father's home in Concord in 1847, but the volume recording his experiences there did not appear until 1854. In the meantime he had completed and published in 1849 his first volume, an account of a tour made in a canoe by Thoreau and his brother John some ten years before, and called *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. It has a thin thread of narrative, but it is made up for the most part of selections from Thoreau's thoughts, poems, and moral observations during the years up to its publication. It is a loose, uneven composition, and has the peculiar quality of works of genius: it is as dry to some readers as it is fascinating to others. Of the thousand copies printed, only about three hundred were disposed of by gift or sale during several years and the publisher finally sent the remainder of the edition to Thoreau's home. He packed the books away and jocularly remarked that he had a library of nine hundred volumes, seven hundred of which he had written himself.

"*Walden, or Life in the Woods.*" But he kept working along quietly in his own vein, accumulating vast stores of notes in his journals, and presently *Walden, or Life in the Woods*, largely made up of material selected from these journals, was ready for publication. This volume, from the peculiar experiment which it recorded, was somewhat more successful, but the public was not yet ready for this new kind of nature interpretation, interspersed with the sententious wisdom and moral meditations of the poet-naturalist.

*Thoreau's other works.* Thoreau did his best thinking during his long daily walks. His notes of his walks are delightful records, and some of his best books, published since his death, are the results of his walking tours, as for example, *The Maine Woods* and *Cape Cod*, edited by Emerson, and four other books edited by H. G. O. Blake under the title of the four seasons, *Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter*. These posthumous volumes consisted of previously published papers and extracts from the thirty or more manuscript volumes of Thoreau's journals. Finally in 1896 these notebooks were published in fourteen volumes under the title of *Thoreau's Journals*, so that now we have a perfect quarry of Thoreau material to dig into at will.

*His death: the Thoreau cairn.* It is a pity that Thoreau did not live to prepare his own books for publication, for he was a minute reviser and a careful workman on his literary style in the proof sheets. Perhaps we may console ourselves with the thought that the unpruned records as we have them give us after all a true picture of the man as he was. About 1860 he exposed himself too freely in his long winter walks, and contracted consumption. He went to Minnesota for a time to see if the dry climate might not help him, but he returned not greatly benefited, and became a helpless but patient invalid. He died May 6, 1862, and was buried in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery of his native town. Close by the spot where Thoreau's cabin stood near Walden

Pond, a large cairn of loose stones has been gradually raised to his memory by the hundreds of pilgrims who come annually to this literary shrine in Thoreau's native haunts.<sup>1</sup>

**James Russell Lowell.** James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) is usually designated as our "representative man of letters." His versatility and originality, his successful productions not in one but in many types of literature, and his characteristic literary attitude even in his moral and political thought and in his diplomatic and other public services, justly entitle him to this designation. He possessed a brilliant mind and was a scholar by instinct and training, and yet we are constantly wondering if he always gave the world the very best of which he was capable. He worked rapidly and with intense fervor, and depended largely on the "first fine, careless rapture" for his best efforts. If he had been just a trifle more patient, painstaking, and self-contained, he might have produced even greater masterpieces than he has done.

*Lowell's ancestry.* Lowell was born February 22, 1819, at "Elmwood," another famous old Cambridge house not far from Longfellow's home, "Craigie House." The old Puritan family of Lowells belonged to what Holmes called "the Brahmins of New England." One member of this family founded the city of Lowell and was among the first to introduce the manufacture of cotton into this country; another endowed "Lowell Institute" in Boston; and his own father, Reverend Charles Lowell, was a noted pastor of a Congregational church in Boston. It was from his mother, Harriet Spence, however, that Lowell inherited his poetic instincts. She believed herself to be descended from the famous old Scotch sea captain, Sir Patrick Spence, of ballad fame.

*Early influences.* In his youth Lowell was surrounded by the best cultural influences, and he read deeply in his

<sup>1</sup>The best life of this author is *Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist*, by W. E. Channing, revised by F. B. Sanborn. A good short biography is that by Henry S. Salt in the Great Writers Series.

father's excellent library. He was an imaginative child, often confessing to have seen visions in his youth, and to have been constantly accompanied by the medieval characters with whom he had become acquainted by reading Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and other imaginative poems and romances. Moreover, he was deeply religious. Mr. Ferris Greenslet, his latest biographer, says that the two significant influences of the poet's early life were "his love for the outdoor world at Elmwood, and his equally strong love for the indoor world of literature." Mr. Greenslet also makes much of the mystical element in Lowell's nature.

*Educated at Harvard.* It was but natural for Lowell to go to Harvard when he was ready to enter college, for his father had graduated there before him, and all his native and local inclinations led him to that institution. He did not make a good record, for he read everything, he says, but those books which would have advanced his academic standing. He was one of the cleverest wits in his class, however, and like Emerson and Holmes, he was chosen class poet. Just two weeks before he was graduated, the authorities of the college rusticated him as a punishment for his continued neglect of his academic duties. He spent two rather dreary weeks at Concord, and in spite of the fact that he met Emerson and Thoreau here and had time to compose and polish his class poem, he confessed to a lifelong feeling of dislike for the famous old village. He was allowed to return to Harvard in time for graduation, but not in time to read his class poem.

*From law to literature.* Like several others of our literary men, Lowell first turned to the law for a livelihood. He took the Bachelor of Laws degree at Harvard and went so far as to enter a law office to practice. About this time (1840) he met and became engaged to Maria White, a beautiful and accomplished young woman, and her influence on him finally determined his life career. She was a great



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

lover of poetry and a strong adherent of the cause of abolition. Lowell began now to write stirring articles for the abolition journals and attractive poems for *The Southern Literary Messenger* and other literary magazines. His first volume, *A Year's Life*, came out in 1841, the most notable poems being those addressed to his prospective wife.

*Growth of his fame: "The Present Crisis."* Encouraged by the reception of his literary efforts, Lowell decided to abandon the law and devote himself to literature. He attempted to form a literary journal, *The Pioneer*, but this venture failed after a brief career. At the end of 1843 a collected edition of his poems appeared and was received with great favor by the public. In 1844, with the success of this volume and the additional income from his contributions to the magazines and from his popular lectures, Lowell was enabled to marry. He had secured a position, too, as editorial writer for *The Pennsylvania Freeman*, a journal at one time edited by Whittier. His fame grew, and he gradually became one of the leading literary men of his time. He was continually flashing forth with some fiery lyric on topics of the day, or quietly publishing some exquisite personal or nature poem. For example, in 1844, during the heated discussion of the slavery question in connection with the admission of Texas to the Union, he produced "*The Present Crisis*," a stirring ode written in the long trochaic meter of Tennyson's "*Locksley Hall*." It caught the public ear and was quoted many times in public addresses during the period of discussion preceding the Civil War. In spite of its occasional character, it contains some fine thoughts and notable passages, such as,

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient Good uncouth;  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth.

This betrays the moralist and the Puritan in Lowell's nature, but in spite of its preaching tone and the local or circumscribed theme, the noble sincerity and fiery passion of the poem lift it clearly into the realm of art.

*Lowell's annus mirabilis: the "Biglow Papers."* The year 1848 has been called Lowell's *annus mirabilis*, or year of wonders. Besides many essays and fugitive poems, he published during this year a new volume of poems, chiefly lyrical, the famous *Biglow Papers*, First Series; the clever satire, "A Fable for Critics"; and chief of all, "The Vision of Sir Launfal." The *Biglow Papers* were cast in the homely New England dialect, and for shrewdness, Yankee common-sense, sparkling wit, and keen political satire, we have nothing in our literature to compare with the combined First Series (1848), dealing with the Mexican War, and the Second Series (1866), dealing with the Civil War. These pieces, begun in a spirit of humor as a light newspaper contribution to the political discussion of the time, brought Lowell national and even international fame, and placed him securely in the first rank of American humorists. They are composed partly in prose and partly in verse, and purport to be mainly poetical productions of Hosea Biglow of Jaalam, with introductory letters mainly by Parson Homer Wilbur. The poems were copied and quoted widely, and some of them, notably "What Mr. Robinson Thinks," became almost as popular as a byword during the period immediately following their appearance. Naturally dialect poems of this character, being chiefly satirical and largely made up of local allusions and topical material, cannot be expected to retain popular favor for many decades; but so sprightly is the humor, so original and fresh is the conception of both character and incident, and so permanent is the basic moral truth of the *Biglow Papers* that it will always

retain its interest for students of our native language and literature. And at least one poem, "The Courtin'," produced not as an integral part of the *Biglow Papers* but under the same impulse, is destined, because of its more human and universal appeal, to retain its place much longer in popular esteem as a standard humorous ballad.

"*A Fable for Critics*." Lowell's critical abilities are well displayed in "A Fable for Critics," a humorous *jeu d'esprit* written, as Lowell says, "at full gallop," from time to time in 1847 and 1849. In spite of the playful badinage and the bantering tone of the satire, the criticism of the various authors was meant to be serious. The piece is composed in a curious four-stressed anapestic rhythm with many ludicrous rimes to fit this unusual meter. So well did Lowell strike off the characteristics of Emerson, Bryant, Whittier, Hawthorne, Cooper, Poe, Longfellow, Irving, Holmes, and even Lowell himself, that lines from the poem are still frequently and approvingly quoted by modern critics. For example,

There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,  
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignified.

There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,  
Three fifths of him genius and two fifths sheer fudge.

There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb  
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme.

As a whole, "A Fable for Critics" is fantastically conceived and loosely thrown together, and it is by no means a work of art. Still it is not too much to say that it is the finest example of satiric criticism in our literature. It may be favorably compared with Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," though it certainly is not written in the revengeful and caustic mood of its English predecessor.

"*The Vision of Sir Launfal*." But by far the most wonderful product of this wonderful year of Lowell's is the



far-famed "Vision of Sir Launfal." This narrative poem in ode form is usually conceded to be the masterpiece of Lowell's poetic genius. It belongs to that large number of poems dealing with the Arthurian legend of the search for the Holy Grail, the marvelously preserved cup from which Jesus drank and served his disciples at the last supper before He was betrayed. Lowell said that the story was his own invention, and the principal idea underlying the poem,—namely, that only through unselfish service to the needy can one hope to find the Holy Grail, that is, realize the ideal of Christ,—is certainly his own, for he had previously used the theme in several other pieces. Every one should study the poem closely for himself, for in no other way can one realize the mystical and romantic beauty of the conception. The young reader should remember that it is a *vision* and not a real adventure upon which Sir Launfal goes. The two preludes are long, and the parts are not well coördinated, so that one is likely to miss the point of the poem as a whole. There are some flat lines and some strained and unnatural images, too, and the work as a whole might have been greatly improved by a careful revision. But these faults may be pardoned in the face of the many excellences that the poem possesses. The descriptive passages on spring and winter in the contrasted preludes are well worth memorizing, as is also the moral attached to the story:

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,  
In whatso we share with another's need;—  
Not that which we give, but what we share,—  
For the gift without the giver is bare.

*Lowell's odes.* Among the later poems by Lowell the "Commemoration Ode," read in 1865 at the Harvard services in commemoration of her sons who fell in the Civil War, is the most notable. The tribute to Lincoln, beginning "And such was he, our Martyr Chief," and the magnificent

patriotic conclusion, beginning "O Beautiful! my Country," have been singled out by discerning critics as the high-water mark not only of Lowell's poetry, but of America's. "Under the Willows" (1868), "The Cathedral" (1869), "Agassiz" (1876), and "Under the Old Elm" (1875) are also worthy of special mention among Lowell's longer and more serious poems. The last named poem celebrates the Old Elm under which Washington took command of the Revolutionary Army, and contains a notable tribute to the great soldier and statesman.

*Lowell as teacher and talker.* In 1856 Lowell, who had already for some years been lecturing on literature at Lowell Institute in Boston, succeeded Longfellow in the Smith Professorship of Spanish and Italian at Harvard. He held this position for seventeen years and earned the distinction of being a most charming and inspiring lecturer. Moreover, Lowell was greatly in demand as a public orator both in England and in America, and he never disappointed his audiences. He had a sort of conversational style of teaching, which his pupils said was delightful. In fact, Lowell was a remarkable conversationalist and letter-writer all his life; it is said that he was the finest talker not only in America but in England during his time, and his two volumes of *Letters* edited by his friend Charles Eliot Norton are charming in every respect. It was in this year that Lowell—his first wife having been dead several years—married Miss Frances Dunlap, a beautiful young woman of excellent family who was at this time the governess of his daughter. It was in this year, too, that *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded with Lowell as its first editor. With the assistance of the principal literary men of New England, Lowell made of this journal what it has since continued to be—our chief literary magazine. Later (1863) he became editorially connected with *The North American Review*.

*Lowell's essays and addresses.* During these years Lowell's



ELMWOOD, LOWELL'S HOME AT CAMBRIDGE

fame as an essayist and critic was continually growing. His collected volumes of prose include *Fireside Travels* (1864), *Among My Books*, First and Second Series (1870, 1876), *My Study Windows* (1871), *Democracy and Other Addresses*

(1886), and *Latest Literary Essays and Addresses* (1892). These works unquestionably place Lowell first among our critical essayists. With his keen insight, fine literary judgment and taste, exuberant humor, and scintillating wit, he makes subjects ordinarily dry and uninteresting exceedingly entertaining and enlightening. He has something fresh and new to say even when he treats familiar subjects like Shakespeare, Spenser, Chaucer, Dryden. The best of his outdoor essays are "My Garden Acquaintance" and "A Good Word for Winter"; and his address on "Democracy," delivered at Birmingham, England, in 1884, is a notable analysis of our national ideals. All Lowell's essays, however, are full of subtleties, minute literary allusions, and fanciful and humorous touches, and hence are rather difficult reading for young students.

*His last years.* In 1877 Lowell was appointed foreign minister at Madrid, and in 1880 he was promoted to be ambassador to England, the most distinguished post in our foreign diplomatic service. It is said that he was up to this time the most popular ambassador America had sent to the Court of Saint James. He was called on for all sorts of addresses, and many honors were heaped upon him. He returned to America in 1885, and though his life was now saddened by the loss of his second wife, he continued to write until his death in 1891. He was buried near Longfellow in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, almost within sight of the old family home in which he was born.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIANS AND ESSAYISTS

**The chief historians.** The nineteenth century New England historians who have achieved literary as well as scholarly

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<sup>1</sup>The standard life of Lowell is that by Horace E. Scudder in two volumes; Ferris Greenslet's life is a delightful shorter study; and *The Letters of James Russell Lowell*, edited by Charles E. Norton in two volumes, gives a still more intimate knowledge of the poet's literary and personal connections.

success in their several fields are George Ticknor, William H. Prescott, John Lothrop Motley, George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, and John Fiske.

**George Ticknor.** George Ticknor (1791-1871), born at Boston and educated at Dartmouth, was one of the first of the American scholars to seek training abroad. He studied in Europe for four years, principally at Göttingen, Germany. He returned to America in 1815 to become Smith professor of modern languages at Harvard, a position which he held until 1834, when he was succeeded by Henry W. Longfellow. Ticknor deserves to be remembered not only as a productive historian and critical writer, but also as one of our first scholars to adopt advanced European methods of research. He did not begin to publish until several years after his retirement from active teaching, but the long period of preparation and the patient method of his composition are justified in the permanent character of his works. His *History of Spanish Literature* (1849) is one of the first great landmarks in American scholarly achievement. Besides this standard literary history, his *Life of William Hickling Prescott* (1864) and his own *Life, Letters, and Journals* (1876) are two productions that are of prime interest to the student of this period of American literature and history.

**William H. Prescott.** William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859) is one of the most fascinating of the New England historians. He had the misfortune to lose one of his eyes through an accident, and the sight of his other eye was almost entirely lost through sympathetic infection; but his determination to make a historian of himself was not to be broken by this handicap. He employed readers and continued to collect notes in his own particular field of research. His first work was in Spanish history, *The Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1837). He followed up this successful venture by his delightful *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1844).

and *The Conquest of Peru* (1847), two books that read like romance, and finally by an incomplete *History of the Reign of Philip the Second* (1855). The truth is that there is a good deal of highly romantic material in these histories, particularly in *The Conquest of Mexico* and *The Conquest of Peru*, for Prescott depended implicitly on the exaggerated and laudatory accounts of the Spanish conquerors of these countries; and besides, he was himself an adherent of the romantic rather than the strictly scientific school of historians. Hence, while his books are still delightful reading, Prescott's history is subject to correction by modern research. His imagination, his wonderfully vivid descriptions, and his attractive literary style are not to be discounted, however, and these characteristics together with the inherently interesting nature of his material have kept his books alive.

**John Lothrop Motley** A more dependable recorder of facts and a profounder interpreter of the underlying philosophy of history was John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877). After studying in Göttingen, Germany, he returned to America to devote himself to writing history. His early efforts met with little encouragement, but he persisted until he won a well-deserved fame. He devoted ten full years of his life, partly in America and partly in Holland, to the study of Dutch history before he published his great work called *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856). He continued his researches in this field, and in 1860 he duplicated the success of his first work by publishing the first two volumes of his *History of the United Netherlands*. It was eight years before the last two volumes were ready to be added to this monumental work. A few years later he completed his last contribution to Dutch history, *The Life and Death of John of Barneveld* (1874). In Europe as well as in America Motley's histories are still recognized to be of the first class both for careful research and judicious analysis of causes and effects in history, and for the brilliance and power of

his style. While the subject-matter of his histories is foreign to our own country, Motley's enthusiasm for democratic ideals and his zeal for human liberty and the heroic sacrifices men have made for it make his work thoroughly American in spirit.

**George Bancroft and John Fiske.** Georǵe Bancroft (1800-1891) and John Fiske (1842-1901) devoted themselves almost entirely to American history. Bancroft gave the best efforts of his life to his *History of the United States* (1834-1882), published in six volumes. This work is notable both for its scholarly accuracy and for its simple and effective style. Fiske, though a younger writer than the other members of the school, holds a secure place as a scholarly historian and as an expository philosopher. His chief merit lies in his ability to present in clear and convincing style the complex problems of history and philosophy without unduly antagonizing the preconceived notions of his readers. His best works are *The Discovery of America*, *The Beginnings of New England*, *The American Revolution*, *The Idea of God*, and *Essays Historical and Literary*.

**Francis Parkman.** For younger readers the historical works of Francis Parkman (1823-1893) take precedence in interest over all others in this class of writing. His long series of volumes covering the struggle between the English and French colonists in North America and his entrancing first volume, detailing an adventurous trip made into the Western wilderness in 1846, make up the most fascinating and trustworthy historical narratives that have so far appeared in America. *The California and Oregon Trails* (1847-49), Parkman's first volume, is a good one for the young reader to begin with. It is as thrilling as an imaginative story of adventure, and yet it is all true to fact, being based on historical records and the actual personal experiences of the adventurous young historian. After the exposure incident to the collection of the material for

his first volume, Parkman's health failed, and he suffered an affliction of the eyes which left him, like Prescott, almost blind. With a courage and fortitude born of genius, he overcame all obstacles and continued to gather material for his series of volumes dealing with the history of the colonial period and Indian life. He had already prepared the manuscript for the first of these volumes, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), when another affliction left him lame for life. After an interval of fourteen years there began to appear in due succession seven other volumes dealing with the same general theme, "France and England in North America." Perhaps after the two books already mentioned, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884) and *A Half Century of Conflict* (1892) are the most entertaining of Parkman's output.

**Summary.** Looking back in a brief survey of this distinguished group of New England historians, we may conclude that Motley and Parkman are the greatest from the point of view of literary grace and power; that Prescott is the most romantic, and for that reason perhaps the most entertaining for the average reader; and that Bancroft and Fiske are the most scientific. For the young reader Parkman is far and away the most desirable one to begin with in the effort to cultivate a taste for historical reading.

**Two later New England essayists.** Among the many skilful recent writers of prose in New England two names seem to have emerged above the mass because of the peculiarly original and individual note in their productions, — namely, Dr. Samuel McChord Crothers (1857–) and Gerald Stanley Lee (1862–). Dr. Crothers was born in Illinois, but he was educated in the East and became thoroughly inoculated with the New England spirit. After graduation at the Harvard Divinity School, he spent about five years as a Presbyterian minister in the far West, and then became a Unitarian preacher and returned to New



England to occupy several pulpits, the last and most important one being at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Rather late in life he began contributing essays to *The Atlantic Monthly*, and from time to time he has collected these into books, such as *The Gentle Reader* (1903), *The Pardoner's Wallet* (1905), *By the Christmas Fire* (1908), *Humanly Speaking* (1912). With his refinement of feeling, his charm of style, his gentle culture, and quiet yet pervasive humor, Dr. Crothers has endeared himself to a host of readers. One critic asserts that no essays since the days of the "Autocrat" have pleased the American public more than have these essays by Dr. Crothers. Entirely different in style and general subject-matter is the work of Gerald Stanley Lee, another New England minister. He was born in Massachusetts and educated at Yale Divinity School, becoming a Congregational minister in 1888. Since 1898 he has been a lecturer and general writer on the arts in modern times. He is possessed of a vigorous, trenchant style, and at times he is emphatically modern in his diction. He has original ideas, however, and he rarely fails to attract and hold the attention of his readers. He is a milder, saner sort of twentieth-century Carlyle, interpreting human nature in new terms for the new age. His best books are *The Child and the Book, a Constructive Criticism of Education* (1902); *The Lost Art of Reading* (1902); *The Voice of the Machines, an Introduction to the Twentieth Century* (1906); *Crowds, a Moving Picture of Democracy* (1913); and *We, a Confession of Faith for Americans During and After the War* (1916).

#### THE MINOR POETS OF NEW ENGLAND

**Preliminary statement.** The New England poets outside of the major group, including Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell, need merely passing consideration. One of them, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, however,

approaches very nearly to the rank of the major group and deserves special mention here; and Josiah Gilbert Holland may also be said to have reached a wider popular audience than most of the other minor poets. After treating these briefly and recording the names of a few of the other minor New England poets, we must make some brief mention of the so-called "New Poetry," which has taken its rise chiefly in New England and in the Middle West during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

**Thomas Bailey Aldrich.** Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907) belongs with Edmund Clarence Stedman and Bayard Taylor in the group of literary men who deserve high commendation for their accomplishment in several spheres of literary activity, but who perhaps fall just a little short of that final attainment which would place them in the first rank. Aldrich was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and though he lived for short periods in New Orleans and New York, he spent the happiest days of his boyhood in the New England town, as *The Story of a Bad Boy*, an autobiographical reminiscence, amply proves. He engaged in business in New York, but in 1855, upon the publication of "The Ballad of Baby Bell" and other poems which gained some popular success, he entered upon a literary career. He was connected with several New York papers, and published a number of volumes of prose and verse; but he seems to have failed to attract any large following. Just after the Civil War he removed to Boston to engage in editorial work, and here he made his home until his death in 1907. Between 1881 and 1890 he was editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, a position which is usually recognized as the very highest attainable among literary journalists. Here he was associated with practically all of the chief New England writers, and he aspired in his own creative work to be ranked with the greatest. His early poetry was touched with a sort of extreme sentimentalism, "Baby

Bell," the tearful ballad which first brought him popular applause, being typical. A strong inclination for the purely sensuous and beautiful no doubt led him into some early extravagances, but these he afterwards carefully pruned away, so that his later work shows a marked restraint and refinement. He confesses that at one time he was entranced by mere external beauty of form and rhythm, but that in his maturer attitude toward his art he cared more for the grace and beauty that dwell with unadorned truth. There seems to be little question, however, but that Aldrich's work as a whole is overdone in its refinement and classic polish. Out of the many volumes of poetry and prose which he published, there must be selected a comparatively small volume of his songs and sonnets as his permanent contribution to our poetry. His two notable prose successes, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869) and *Marjorie Daw* (1873), both delightful narratives, will doubtless continue to hold a high place among the best American stories.

**J. G. Holland.** Dr. Josiah Gilbert Holland (1819-1881) belongs to the older school of New England poets, though he was born as late as 1819, the year in which Lowell was born. He wrote books of many kinds and was a successful lyceum lecturer. His long narrative poems, *Bitter-Sweet* (1858) and *Katrina* (1867), reached a circulation of more than a hundred thousand copies each, and it may be said that they deserve the broad popular approval which they attained. Some passages from his longer poems, such, for example, as the cradle song from *Bitter-Sweet*, beginning,

What is the little one thinking about?

Very wonderful things, no doubt!

Unwritten history!

Unfathomed mystery!

Yet he laughs and cries, and eats and drinks,  
And chuckles and crows, and nods and winks,  
As if his head were as full of kinks  
And curious riddles as any sphinx!

have become popular through frequent quotation and declamation; and many of his shorter poems have secured a similar place of fixed popularity in the general mind of our citizenship, such, for example, as the following well-known poem in irregular sonnet form:

#### WANTED

God give us men! A time like this demands  
 Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands;  
 Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
 Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
 Men who possess opinions and a will;  
 Men who have honor.— men who will not lie;  
 Men who can stand before a demagogue,  
 And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking!  
 Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog  
 In public duty, and in private thinking:  
 For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,  
 Their large professions and their little deeds,—  
 Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,  
 Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps!

After he was fifty Dr. Holland became editor of *Scribner's Monthly* and lived in New York, but his most significant work was produced in New England.

**Women poets.** New England has been particularly productive of women poets of merit. Foremost among these should be named Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), who was engaged in the abolition and other reform movements and wrote several plays, much general prose, and many poems. Her "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written early in the Civil War under the stress of intense emotion, patriotic fervor, and religious ecstasy, is the only production of Mrs. Howe's which has survived in popular favor. Other women poets are Lucy Larcom (1826-1893), a cotton-mill worker of Lowell, Massachusetts, who wrote many pleasing but light and sometimes over-sentimental poems for children; Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), a recluse of Amherst, Massachusetts,

author of a number of very short and tense but strikingly original lyrics; and Celia Thaxter (1836-1894), the daughter of a lighthouse keeper and author of highly colored but vivid prose in her volume called *Among the Isles of Shoals*, and of several wellnigh flawless sea poems, such as "The Sandpiper." Celia Thaxter's lyrics are especially suitable for young readers, and they have been frequently included in juvenile reading books. Anna Hempstead Branch, of Connecticut, is one of the most promising of the younger women poets who have not allied themselves with the imagists or writers of free-verse. She published a prize poem, "The Road 'Twixt Heaven and Hell," in *The Century Magazine* in 1898. She has since issued three volumes of excellent poetry—*The Heart of the Road* (1901), *The Shoes that Danced* (1905), and *The Rose of the Wind* (1910).<sup>1</sup>

**Some minor poets.** Among the minor poets of the New England states, mention should be made of Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895), of Boston, a Baptist minister who wrote several familiar hymns but whose greatest success was his song which has become the best known of our patriotic hymns—namely, "America";<sup>2</sup> Jones Very (1813-1880), a native of Salem, graduate of Harvard, member of the transcendental group, and author of a large number of graceful short poems and sonnets; John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), of Vermont, a clever writer of humorous verse; Thomas William Parsons (1819-1892), of Massachusetts, author of an excellent translation of Dante's *Inferno* and a number of other poetical works of a distinctly high quality;

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<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> S. F. Smith was a member of the famous Harvard class of 1829, and is referred to as follows by Oliver Wendell Holmes in the poem, "The Boys," read at the reunion of the class on its thirtieth anniversary:

And here's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—  
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith:  
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—  
Just read on his medal, "My Country of thee!"

and George Edward Woodberry (1855-), of Massachusetts, for a number of years connected with Columbia University in New York as professor of comparative literature, equally praised as a critic and general essayist and as a poet, particularly as a poet of broad patriotism and philosophic insight into modern life.

#### THE NEW POETRY IN NEW ENGLAND

**Edwin Arlington Robinson.** Among the scores or more of the recent New England poets, Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-), Robert Frost, and Amy Lowell may be singled out for special consideration. Mr. Robinson was born in Maine and educated at Harvard, though on account of the decline of his father's health he left college before he graduated. His first volume of poetry was called *The Children of the Night* (1897), a rather gloomy book, though full of promise. It contains some short character sketches in a somewhat cynical mood, suggestive of the similar later work of Edgar Lee Masters. Then he went to New York to try to make his way by writing. In 1902 he published a volume called *Captain Craig*, containing several long poems in blank verse and a sheaf of lyrics and sonnets and adaptations from the Greek. His third volume, *The Town Down the River*, made up chiefly of character studies, appeared in 1910, and his fourth, *The Man Against the Sky*, in 1916. It will be seen that Mr. Robinson has published rather slowly, but he has shown a steady growth in his art, and in this last volume he has reached a decidedly high level of poetic power. Particularly in the poem "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" has he succeeded in presenting a lively and vigorous portrait of two notable characters in English literature—namely, Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. The title poem, too, "The Man Against the Sky," and the character sketch "Flammonde" are excellent poems. Says Miss Lowell: "Mr. Robinson

deals with something which may fitly be called raw human nature, but human nature simple, direct, and as it is. Those last three words contain the gist of the whole matter. In them lies Mr. Robinson's gift to the 'New Poetry'; simple, direct, and as it is."<sup>1</sup>

**Robert Frost.** Robert Frost (1875-), though born in California, was educated in New England and finally married and engaged in farming and teaching here and there in New Hampshire. He lived in England from 1912 to 1915, and here his first volume, *A Boy's Will* (1913), was published and warmly praised by the English reviewers. Upon his return to America he intended to retire to his farm, but he was called from his retreat to become professor of literature at Amherst College in Massachusetts. He has studied very closely the strange psychology and habits of the surviving types of the earlier New England rural population. In the poems in *North of Boston* (1914) and *Mountain Intervals* (1916), the author sedulously avoids all of the ordinary poetic diction and ornamentation, and his style is notably frank and sincere in the presentation of the simple New Hampshire rural life. But over all the familiar and commonplace incidents which he chooses to write about, Mr. Frost manages to cast the soft light of genuine poetry. He merely portrays the ordinary daily tasks, such as the mending of a broken wall, harvesting the apples, or picking the blueberries, presenting them from the farmer's simple, human point of view; and under the realism of his homely style these everyday incidents take on a genuine poetic coloring and prove to be subjects well worthy of poetic treatment.

**Amy Lowell.** Miss Lowell (1874-) is a member of the famous Abbott Lowell family. One of her brothers, A. L. Lowell, is president of Harvard University. Another was

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<sup>1</sup>*Tendencies of Modern American Poetry*, p. 52.

the late noted astronomer, Percival Lowell. Miss Lowell is the best known of the modern school of imagists and



AMY LOWELL

free-verse poets. *In A Dome of Many-Colored Glass* (1912), *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), and *Men, Women, and*



*Ghosts* (1917), Miss Lowell has made her most distinctive contribution to the new school of imagists, known particularly as writers of free-verse. Many of the new poets have discarded the regular stereotyped forms of rhythm and rime, and adopted a sort of irregular phrasal rhythm, by which they claim to gain more freedom in unifying the image and more latitude in the choice of the exact word which will convey the poetic thought, mood, or symbol as conceived by the imagination. The influence of the imagists of the Orient, particularly the poets of Japan and China, is also acknowledged; and it is evident that Walt Whitman's free-rhythm verse has had considerable weight with the new poets in suggesting the invention of novel verse forms for their poems. In preparing their first anthology, *Some Imagist Poets* (1915), they laid down the following principles:<sup>1</sup>

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods—and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods. We do not insist upon “free-verse” as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as for a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry a new cadence means a new idea.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image (hence the name: “Imagist”).
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of poetry.

It will be observed that there is nothing very new in these principles. The essentials of the new poetry may be said to have been announced by Poe in his essay on “The Poetic

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from Miss Lowell's *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*. The English members of the imagist group represented in *Some Imagist Poets*, published successively in 1914, 1915, and 1916, are Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint, and D. H. Lawrence; and the American representatives are Amy Lowell, “H. D.,” and John Gould Fletcher.

Principle." He argued for originality of expression, for the creation of new rhythms to express new moods, and for concentration or brevity of poetic expression; and all poets strive for the exact word, for vivid images, and for clear and distinct, if not "hard," effects in their verse. Whatever the worth or the final effects of this new type of verse may be, we must admit that the imagists have at least helped to bring about a marked revival of interest in poetry during the past decade, and we may confidently hope that out of this revival of interest there will eventually emerge some products of permanent value. "The Gift" by Miss Lowell will illustrate the imagists' art in its simpler forms:

#### THE GIFT

See! I give myself to you, Beloved!  
 My words are little jars  
 For you to take up and put on a shelf.  
 Their shapes are quaint and beautiful,  
 And they have many pleasant colors and lustres  
 To recommend them.  
 Also the scent from them fills the room  
 With sweetness of flowers and crushed grasses.

When I shall have given you the last one  
 You will have the whole of me,  
 But I shall be dead.

Miss Lowell has also written a good deal of criticism on the new poetry, as in her recent volume, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), and she is generally acknowledged to be the leader of the school of imagists both in England and in America. Two other American poets are distinctly identified with this school—namely, "H. D." (1886–), Miss Hilda Doolittle, of Philadelphia, now the wife of the English imagist poet, Richard Aldington, herself an extremely sensitive artist in impressionistic free-verse; and John Gould Fletcher<sup>1</sup> (1886–), of Little Rock, Arkansas.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Mr. Fletcher's work, see page 361.

THE NEW ENGLAND WRITERS OF FICTION

**The importance of New England fiction.** Until very recently the writers of fiction in all parts of our country seem to have taken precedence over the poets and general prose writers, both in number and in popularity. Certainly in New England during the last half of the nineteenth century the novelists and short-story writers easily assume the place of greatest importance. We may begin with Hawthorne and trace the succession of writers of fiction on down through Louisa May Alcott, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Edward Everett Hale, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Donald G. Mitchell, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Sarah Orne Jewett, Alice Brown, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and dozens of minor writers of fiction. Of these we have treated Hawthorne somewhat at length elsewhere.

**Louisa M. Alcott.** Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888), the daughter of the noted transcendentalist, Bronson Alcott, wrote a number of books which have for many years held their place at the very top of our juvenile classics. *Little Women* appeared in 1868, and it was an immense success from the very first. It was followed by other volumes in the same vein, among them *Little Men*, *An Old-Fashioned Girl*, *Eight Cousins*, and *Rose in Bloom*. Many an American boy and girl has learned to read good books by the frequent thumbing of these well-known juveniles. The moral tone is high, the home atmosphere attractive, and the style vigorous and sympathetic. In fact, these books leave little to be desired as stories for young folks.

**Harriet Beecher Stowe: "Uncle Tom's Cabin."** Though Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) is the author of a dozen or more volumes, she is best known by a single book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). By lighting upon the exact psychological moment in the happy coincidence of a popular national theme with the temper and thought of the time, Mrs. Stowe made of this book one of the most powerful influences in

the history of our country. Without a doubt, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the big forces which helped to bring about the Civil War; and since it voiced the sentiment of so large a number of our people and was on the successful side in the issue of the abolition of negro slavery in America, it has inevitably taken its place as a classic in our literature. It has no great merit purely as a work of art: it over-idealizes the negro in making him nobler in character than the white people themselves, it is crude and faulty in plot structure, it is sensational in many of its incidents, it is an avowed purpose novel; and yet in its evident sincerity of purpose, in its fervid emotional appeal, and in its intense zeal for the reform of the evils which it portrays, the book rises into the realm of power if not of pure art.

**Richard Henry Dana, Jr.** Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (1815-1882), wrote the well-known sea tale, *Two Years before the Mast* (1840). It is the realistic story of his own experiences in a long cruise on a sailing vessel from Boston around Cape Horn to California and back. For graphic description, stirring incident, and romantic interest, the book is a prime favorite with young readers.

**Donald G. Mitchell.** Donald Grant Mitchell (1822-1908), a native of Connecticut and a graduate of Yale, won wide popularity through his sentimentalized essays strung on a thin thread of romance in *Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) and *Dream Life* (1857) published under the pen-name of "Ik Marvel." The light and genial humor, dreamy idealism, and persistent optimism, and the delicate and tender sentiment which is infused into these volumes keep them alive among a certain class of readers. Mitchell's later and more pretentious nature prose in *Wet Days at Edgewood* and *My Farm at Edgewood* and his warmly appreciative literary criticism in *English Lands, Letters, and Kings* and *American Lands and Letters*, though pleasantly written and more highly esteemed by their author than his earlier more

romantic work, have not reached the wide circle of readers which *Reveries of a Bachelor* and *Dream Life* commanded and still command.

**Other novelists and short-story writers.** Among the better class of short stories Edward Everett Hale's masterpiece, "The Man without a Country" (1863), should be remembered. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward (1844-1911), of Massachusetts, made almost a sensation with her *Gates Ajar* (1868), a book which is more of a rhapsody or mystical revelation of religious enthusiasm than a novel, a sort of death song in prose representing the intense spirit of reincarnated New England Puritanism in its rapt vision of a new heaven and a new earth made sacred through suffering. The Civil War had but recently closed when the book appeared, and thousands of persons who had lost their loved ones in that terrible period found solace and comfort in the ecstatic vision set forth in *Gates Ajar*. Among Mrs. Ward's later works is *Beyond the Gates* (1883), which continues the theme of her first famous work. She is somewhat more of a moralist than an artist perhaps, but her intense subjectivity and exalted idealism give a peculiar power to her stories, especially in soothing the hearts and stirring the moral natures of her many sympathetic readers. Rose Terry Cooke (1827-1892), of Connecticut, is both poet and short-story writer. She is particularly happy in her humorous characterization of New England types. Her best stories are collected in *The Deacon's Week* (1884) and *Huckleberries Gathered from New England Hills* (1891). Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1857-) and Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-) have written a number of excellent short stories of New England life. Mrs. Freeman's best volumes of short stories are *A Humble Romance* (1887) and *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (1891). Miss Jewett's best short stories are collected in the volumes called *A White Heron and Other Stories* (1886) and *Strangers and Wayfarers* (1890).

Both of these women have written longer stories, Mrs. Freeman's best novels being *Pembroke* (1894) and *The Portion of Labor* (1901); and Miss Jewett's best longer works, *Deephaven* (1871) and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). Alice Brown (1857-) of New Hampshire, is another women writer who has made good use of New England rural types in her fiction. Her dialect stories in *Meadow Grass* (1895), *Tiverton Tales* (1899), and *The Country Road* (1906) form her most distinctive contribution to the New England local-color literature already made familiar by the work of Miss Jewett and Mrs. Freeman. Some critics are inclined to rank Miss Brown's work even higher than that of the two other women just named. In the faithful reproduction of the New England atmosphere, in humor, pathos, and photographic realism, and in beauty and grace of style, Miss Brown's stories are certainly among the most artistic products of their kind. In her longer novels, too, such as *The Story of Thyrza* (1909) and *John Winterborne's Family* (1910), she has maintained a similarly high level.<sup>1</sup>

**William Dean Howells: his literary position.** Two important realists among New England fiction writers have been reserved for the close of this section—namely, William Dean Howells and Henry James, Jr. Though born and reared in Ohio, William Dean Howells (1837-) has become intimately associated with the great New England writers and he is inevitably classed with them. He learned to set type in his youth, and he may be said to have educated himself largely at the printer's case and at editorial desks. In 1860 with his friend John James Piatt he published a volume called *Poems of Two Friends*. Howells then wrote a campaign biography of Abraham Lincoln, and in 1861 he was rewarded by an appointment as consul at Venice, a position which he filled for four years. Here he developed his taste and increased his culture by a close study of

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 140.

Italian art and architecture. His four years in Venice may be called the period of his college education. As a result of his studies he published two excellent books of descriptive and critical observation—namely, *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*. These were but the preparation for the realistic fiction which he was to begin soon after his return to America. He had already had contributions accepted by *The Atlantic Monthly*, and in 1866 he became assistant editor of this important literary periodical. Then in 1871 he was made editor-in-chief, a position which he held for ten years. Later he became associated with *Harper's Monthly* and *The North American Review*, and he is still (1919) on the active staff of *Harper's* in the conduct of the Editor's Easy Chair. During this long period of over half a century in which he has been connected with these prominent periodicals, Mr. Howells has produced a marvelous number of excellent books. He is ranked among the very first of American literary critics, travel writers, and essayists, and in his capacity as editor and adviser of young writers he has justly earned the affectionate title of "Dean of American Letters." With his added accomplishments as a creative writer in his novels and literary farces, he is undoubtedly the most distinguished of our present-day literary men.

*His novels.* Howells's chief claim to permanent fame rests upon his realistic novels. The theory of fiction which he has expanded both in his critical writings and in his own practice is that a novel should present life as it really is, without the admixture of romantic elements which go to make up the larger part of most works of fiction. He realized that the artist must select his material from the mass of facts presented in real life and that the creative imagination must mold this material into an artistic whole; but he refused to admit improbable and highly colored incidents and romantic settings merely to increase interest. *Their Wedding Journey* (1871) was the first of Howells's

long series of realistic narratives dealing with New England life and character. Perhaps the best among his thirty or more volumes which may be classed as fiction are *A Foregone Conclusion* (1874), *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879), *A Modern Instance* (1882), and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). Of these *The Rise of Silas Lapham* is usually considered Howells's masterpiece. It certainly takes rank among the four or five greatest American novels. After he was fifty years of age Howells came under the influence of the Russian philosopher and novelist Tolstoi, and since that time his works have shown a seriousness of purpose in the criticism of life which was noticeably absent from his earlier stories. Of those more mature stories the best are *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889), *The World of Chance* (1893), *The Traveler from Altruria* (1894), and *Through the Eye of a Needle* (1907).

*His farces.* In another type of literature Howells undoubtedly takes precedence over all other American writers—namely, in the literary farce. The farce is not usually considered among the finer types of literature: but Howells has put into his farces so much of good, healthy humor; so much of genial satire, sparkling repartee, and brilliant wit; so much of keen analysis of real life and real characters—that his productions of this kind must inevitably be recognized as belonging to pure literature. Among the best of his many farces are *A Counterfeit Presentment*, *The Parlor Car*, *The Sleeping Car*, *The Elevator*, *The Mouse Trap*, and *The Unexpected Guest*.

**Henry James, Jr.: his position.** Henry James, Jr. (1843-1915), was born in New York City, lived in Boston for a time, and was educated partly in Boston and partly abroad. He doubtless inherited his tendency toward subtle psychological analysis from his father, Henry James, the distinguished New England theologian; this point may be further substantiated by noting that the late William James, the brother of Henry James, Jr., was recognized as



the greatest American psychologist. In 1869 Henry James, Jr., went abroad, and he lived most of his later life in France and England. In fact, so continuous was his residence in England that by many he is considered as an English rather than an American writer. Just before his death in 1915, when the United States had not yet declared war against Germany, he renounced his allegiance to America and claimed citizenship in England in order to devote his property and his literary gifts more fully to the cause of the Allies in the great World War. But we may claim the works of this writer as at least partially American, and as such we are led to class him with the New England rather than the New York School.


*His fiction.* The fiction of Henry James, Jr., is usually judged to be too difficult for young readers. He is, like Browning in poetry, a sort of "subtle analyst of the soul," and in his psychological studies he deals with material which is uninteresting because it is peculiar and unusual and largely unintelligible to young readers. But to older and more thoughtful readers James's work, particularly his earlier fiction, is a source of delight. In his later work his style becomes so complex, so hair-splitting in thought, and so shadowy, figurative, and obscure in expression, that very few readers can follow him with pleasure. He has been called the international novelist, because most of his books have a sort of international setting and deal with the peculiar point of view of persons of one nationality when brought into contrast with those of another nationality. His best stories are *The American* (1877), *Daisy Miller* (1878), *An International Episode* (1879), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Wings of a Dove* (1902). Among his best short stories may be named "The Real Thing," "The Lesson of the Master," and "Sir Edmund Orne," a ghost story. James's books of literary criticism, like his novels, demand close attention in the reading. His fine analysis of the style of

our greatest novelist in his critical volume *Nathaniel Hawthorne* in the English Men of Letters Series deserves special mention. James has done much critical work also in foreign literature, especially in his admirable estimates of French authors.

### 3. THE SOUTHERN GROUP

#### PRELIMINARY SURVEY

**General conditions in the South.** The South was somewhat slower than the North in developing her literary resources. It is true that during the colonial period, the first literature written within the present boundaries of the United States was produced in the Virginia Colony; but the attitude of the settlers in the Southern Colonies toward literature was always amateurish and incidental rather than professional and serious, and the result was that very few of the greater minds in the South during the first two and a half centuries of our history turned to literature as the principal sphere for their intellectual efforts. And even since 1865, on account of the scarcity of large cities and the almost total absence of publishing facilities, there have been no nationally important literary centers in the South. In a section devoted largely to varied agricultural pursuits, the people are naturally widely scattered and diverse in mode of life and thinking. On the other hand, in more concentrated and congested centers where commercial and manufacturing interests attract the population into large city groups, we should naturally expect literary centers and publishing interests to be developed. In the North and East, even before the beginning of the nineteenth century, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston had already grown into comparatively large commercial and manufacturing centers. In the South there were scarcely any large cities or thickly populated districts even up to the end of the century. Baltimore, Charleston, Savannah, and



New Orleans were ports of some importance, it is true; but with the single exception of Richmond, Virginia, the inland cities such as Columbia, South Carolina, and Raleigh, North Carolina, were small in size and of little significance as literary centers.

**Charleston and Richmond as literary centers.** Of all these towns Charleston and Richmond are the only ones that may be said to have become in any sense literary centers. At Charleston William Gilmore Simms was a sort of leader around whom a number of ambitious young men like Paul Hamilton Hayne and Henry Timrod gathered, deferring to his judgment and regarding him in literary matters as guide, philosopher, and friend. Besides Simms's home, John Russell's book store was one of their places of meeting. Here in 1857, the same year in which *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded, *Russell's Magazine* was launched under the editorship of Paul Hamilton Hayne.<sup>1</sup> This periodical bade fair to become a strong rival of *The Southern Literary Messenger* at Richmond, but it suspended publication at the approach of the Civil War. The dominant attitude of the Southern people seemed to be one of receptivity rather than active participation in literary matters. The Southern colonial gentleman preferred to get his education and his literature from England. Moreover, he looked upon literature as a means of diversion and amusement for his idle moments rather than as a serious employment for his mature powers. To him the management of his estate and participation in politics made up the serious business of life. Even until late in the century, the common schools of the South lagged far behind the system of public education developed in the North and East. The methods of intercommunication were inadequate and poorly maintained. Roads were bad, and mail routes were slow and

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<sup>1</sup> See Hayne's essay on "Ante-bellum Charleston," reprinted in *Library of Southern Literature*, Vol. V.

uncertain. Periodicals were few in number and commanded only a meager patronage among the richer families. *The Southern Literary Messenger* (1834-1864) at Richmond attained under the editorship of Poe, Thompson, and others, a notable rank, it is true, in the quarter of a century immediately preceding the Civil War, but even this journal was forced to suspend publication near the close of the war.

**The influence of slavery.** The economic success of negro slave-holding on Southern plantations had drawn most of the slaves from the North and the East where slave labor was unprofitable, and so the South became the great slave section of our country long before the middle of the century. Slave traffickers and shipowners had found a profitable market for their trade in the South, and they prosecuted their business so successfully as to fill the country with African slaves. Though there were a few Southern slave owners who believed in the abolition of slavery, the South as a whole naturally took the position that slavery was a good thing both for the black and for the white race. The question of states' rights, or local self-government by the individual states, was closely bound up with the question of the abolition of slavery, and it was upon the constitutional grounds of states' rights that the argument for the continuation of slavery in the South was primarily based. The policy of territorial expansion and the creation of new states out of the territory acquired by the Florida and the Louisiana purchases also brought the question of slavery to the front, for it was necessary to determine beforehand whether the states to be carved out of the newly acquired territory should be free or slave-holding. Out of all this controversy there naturally arose in the South, as also in the North, a notable school of orators.

**Robert E. Lee, a typical Southerner.** Just as Washington and Jefferson may be considered typical Southern figures in the earlier Colonial and Revolutionary civilization, so

Robert Edward Lee (1807-1870) may be singled out as the culmination of the later Southern chivalry. He was born of distinguished Southern ancestry, bred as a gentleman of the Old South, and educated as a soldier at the national military academy at West Point. The world has recognized him as one of the greatest soldiers of modern times, but we are here more interested in him as a typical product of the antebellum Southern civilization and as a writer of simple, dignified prose in his private letters and official reports. He possessed all the kindliness, gentility, and dignified reserve of the Southern planter class. His home at Arlington, just across the Potomac River at Washington City, is still one of the most beautiful and distinctive examples of the Colonial type of the Southern home. His character as a man even exceeds his reputation as a soldier. He was pure and unsullied in heart, firm and upright in all his dealings, and profoundly religious in his nature. We do not think of him at all as a literary man, and yet his "Farewell Address to his Soldiers" and many of his private letters and official reports, both as commanding general of the Confederate Army and as president of Washington and Lee University after the War, are models of the unconscious simplicity, dignity, and reserve which were characteristic of the man. His definition of truth as "the shortest distance between a fact and the expression of it," as well as the following well-known maxims from his advice to his son, will illustrate the cogency and precision with which he expressed his thoughts.

Frankness is the child of honesty and courage.

Never do a wrong to make a friend or to keep one.

Deal kindly, but firmly, with all your classmates; you will find it the policy which will wear.

Above all, do not appear to others what you are not.

Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language.

Do your duty in all things. . . . You cannot do more; you should never do less.

**Localism in recent years.** Following the bitter periods of controversy, war, and political reconstruction, which we need not stop to discuss here, came the period of readjustment and return to the peaceful arts of life. During this period one of the distinctive features developed in our national literature has been the growth of localism in the various sections of the country. In the South particularly has this note of localism found many well-defined forms of expression. In almost every Southern state there have arisen worthy writers of fiction and verse whose principal appeal has been in the interpretation of distinct racial types and social conditions and local backgrounds. The fact that there are certain more or less distinct and segregated groups or classes of people in the South has greatly stimulated the endeavor to express this note of localism. The Georgia "cracker," the Tennessee and Kentucky mountaineer, the Louisiana Creole, the Texas cowboy and frontiersman, and the several types of negro life are some of the distinct classes which have attracted treatment in this local-color literature. In addition to these, the upper or ruling classes of white citizens, descended from the early English or Anglo-Saxon settlers, have distinct and more or less stable local characteristics.

**Classification of the authors.** The major Southern poets as usually named are Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Timrod, Paul Hamilton Hayne, and Sidney Lanier. It is difficult to single out any of the prose writers who rise above the large school of minor authors, but we may name after Poe, who is equally notable in prose and poetry, William Gilmore Simms and John Pendleton Kennedy among the older writers, and Joel Chandler Harris, F. Hopkinson Smith, Thomas Nelson Page, George Washington Cable, and O. Henry (Sydney Porter) among the later writers. Simms and Kennedy can hardly be ranked as authors of great national importance, though Simms approaches such a standard; but their

influence in the South, where literature was slow in developing, certainly gives them a prominent place in their own section. Joel Chandler Harris in his successful exploitation of negro folklore, and in his incidental character creation, has distinguished himself somewhat more prominently than have his contemporary writers of local-color fiction; and O. Henry has made a place for himself by his distinct advance in the art of the American short story. We may conveniently discuss the Southern authors under the divisions of Orators, Poets, and Writers of Fiction.

#### SOUTHERN ORATORS

**Oratory in the South.** Throughout the history of the nation the South has been particularly prolific in the production of distinguished orators and political writers. Southerners have always seemed to take more naturally to legal and forensic debate, political writing, and oratory than to the milder and more purely artistic forms of literary expression. They have uniformly proved themselves to be skilful manipulators of public bodies in spontaneous spoken address. In fact, the energy of the best Southern minds has been largely expended in the development of political and other forms of emotional or spontaneous oratory. Formerly in the South every ambitious youth turned to politics and law as a career, and rarely thought of taking up pure literature except as a side issue or with some feeling of condescension. During the earlier periods of our national history such names as Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, John Marshall, and John Randolph, all of Virginia; Charles Pinckney, Henry Laurens, and John Rutledge of South Carolina; and William Pinkney of Maryland are synonymous with the best of early American oratorical and forensic power and achievement. A long list of notable Southerners who have risen to oratorical eminence since these early

times might be given here, but it seems better to confine our brief notice to a few of the most important orators of the nineteenth century.

**William Wirt.** William Wirt (1772-1834), of Maryland and later of Virginia, has already been mentioned as the biographer of Patrick Henry, and in this connection it was noted that it is impossible to tell just how much of Henry's famous speech on liberty we owe to Wirt's own facile and fluent pen. It is certain that Wirt possessed the instinct for effective oratory, as is amply illustrated by his famous speech at the trial of Aaron Burr for treason, and by his oft-repeated piece called "The Blind Preacher," said to be an accurate portrayal of the Reverend James Waddell, a noted Presbyterian minister of Virginia. The last-named selection is to be found in the volume called *Letters of a British Spy* (1803), a series of letters which, the author pretended, were left in an American inn by a British officer. This and *The Life of Patrick Henry* (1817) are the chief contributions of Wirt to our literature. He wrote in a somewhat florid and emotional style, but he had acquired from his model, the *Spectator* papers, a good deal of the grace and finish of the Addisonian prose, and he was recognized in the early nineteenth century, according to Professor Trent, as "the most conspicuous literary man in the South."

**Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Robert Y. Hayne.** During the long controversial period which preceded the Civil War, Henry Clay (1777-1852), born in Virginia but reared in Kentucky, and John Caldwell Calhoun (1782-1850), and Robert Young Hayne (1791-1839), both of South Carolina, were the most prominent of the earlier Southern leaders in Congress. Clay was a natural orator and a born conciliator. Because of his efforts to compromise the differences between the North and the South, he is known in history as "the great pacificator." Calhoun is recognized as the profoundest expositor of the doctrine of states' rights



and the strict construction of the Constitution, and the chief opponent of the Northern school advocating union and strong federal centralization, led by Daniel Webster and the later abolitionists. Hayne was a disciple of Calhoun in his interpretation of the doctrine of states' rights and the Constitution. In what is known as "The Great Debate" (1830), Hayne was pitted against Webster. While history has decided in favor of Webster's position, contemporary opinion records that Hayne proved himself a worthy opponent to the great New England orator.

**L. Q. C. Lamar and Henry W. Grady.** Since the Civil War, particularly during the period of reconciliation following the period of reconstruction, two names stand out with peculiar prominence in the banishment of sectional animosity and the re-welding of the North and the South—namely, those of L. Q. C. Lamar (1825-1893), of Mississippi, whose "Eulogy on Charles Sumner" is one of the glories of American oratory, and Henry Woodfin Grady (1851-1889), of Georgia, whose eloquent speeches on "The New South," delivered in 1886 before the New England Society of New York City, "The South and Her Problems," delivered at Dallas, Texas, in 1887, and "The Race Problem," delivered in Boston just a few weeks before his death in 1889, are recognized as three of the most impassioned and finished orations in our literature.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE MAJOR SOUTHERN POETS

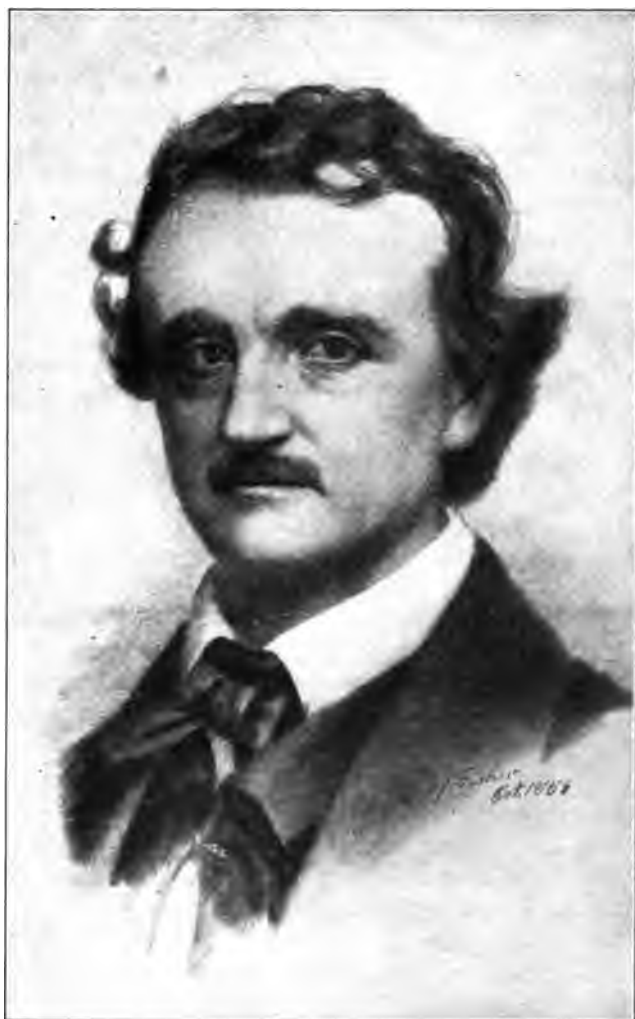
**Edgar Allan Poe.** Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), though descended on his father's side from a distinguished Maryland family, once called himself a Bostonian because he was born in the city of Boston; but he was reared in the South, and he usually designated himself as a Southerner, and he is generally so regarded. His genius, however, knew no

<sup>1</sup>For Lamar's "Eulogy on Sumner," extracts from Grady's speeches, and other fully edited selections from Southern prose writers and poets, see Payne's *Southern Literary Readings*, Rand McNally & Co., 1913.

restrictions of territory; in fact, Poe is perhaps the most universally detached of all our poets. His father, David Poe, was educated for the law, but a predilection for the stage led him to join a traveling theatrical troupe before he built up a practice. In this troupe he met Mrs. C. D. Hopkins, a talented English actress whose maiden name was Elizabeth Arnold. Shortly after the death of Mr. Hopkins, who was manager of the company, David Poe married the widow. Of the three children—two boys and a girl—born to David and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, Edgar was the second son.

*How Poe fell in with the Allans.* The life of these strolling actors was a hard one. The family was forced to travel from city to city in order to earn a livelihood, which was at best precarious. It seems that the mother was depended upon to support the family, for David Poe was not a successful actor. Mrs. Poe was filling an engagement in Boston at the time of Edgar's birth, January 19, 1809. Her husband died about 1810, and in 1811 she found herself in the city of Richmond, Virginia, helpless and stricken with illness. An appeal in the Richmond newspapers brought material relief; but Mrs. Poe was beyond human aid, and within a few days she died. The children, thus left alone, were cared for by various persons. Edgar had attracted the attention of Mrs. John Allan, the wife of a well-to-do tobacco merchant, and he was taken into her childless home and rechristened Edgar Allan Poe.

*Poe's education.* The boy was an extremely bright and handsome child, and his precocity attracted much attention. Mr. and Mrs. Allan became devotedly attached to their ward and lavished on him all that partiality could suggest or wealth supply. In 1815 Mr. Allan moved temporarily to England to establish there a branch house for his firm. Edgar, who accompanied his foster parents, attended an English boarding school near London. In the story of



*From a rare lithograph portrait made in 1859 by F. J. Fisher,  
now in possession of the Westmoreland Club, Richmond, Va.*

EDGAR ALLAN POE

"William Wilson" Poe gives many reminiscences of his school life there. After five years in England the Allans returned to Richmond, and Edgar was placed in a private school. In 1826 he was sent to the University of Virginia. Here he made a brilliant record in the languages and in mathematics, but he indulged in drinking and gambling and was removed from the university within a year.

*Poe goes to Boston: "Tamerlane."* Then began the period of wandering and unhappiness brought about by his perverse disposition. Mr. Allan, whose patience had already been sorely tried, took Poe into his office, feeling it would be better for the boy to earn his own living; whereupon Poe, who was now about eighteen years old, left home to seek his fortune in Boston. Here he succeeded in getting a publisher for his first slender volume of verses, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, in 1827, but little is known of his movements during the time he was in Boston.

*Poe's military experience.* The next we hear of Poe, he had enlisted, under the assumed name of Edgar A. Perry, as a private in the United States Army. He remained in the army for nearly two years, being promoted to the post of sergeant major. Part of the time he was stationed at the arsenal of Fort Moultrie, on an island in Charleston Harbor. Here he gained the local color for his famous story, "The Gold Bug," written some years later. Poe now began to feel the folly of his breach with his foster parents, and on hearing that Mrs. Allan was critically ill he made application for a permit to visit Richmond, in order that he might see her before her death. A partial reconciliation followed between him and Mr. Allan, who secured Poe's release from the army, and with the aid of influential friends obtained for him an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. But the perversity of the young man's nature again asserted itself, and in less than a year he began to tire of life at West Point.

He deliberately neglected his duties until he had accumulated demerits enough to cause his dismissal.

*The 1831 edition of his poems.* Before he entered West Point, another edition of his poems, containing some new matter, had been published; and in 1831 still another was brought out. This volume contained the first draft of some of Poe's most famous poems, notably "To Helen" and "Israfel," which are now universally recognized as masterpieces in the pure lyric.

*Poe's first stories.* Mr. Allan had married again by this time, and Poe, finding that he had no longer any hope of a reconciliation with his foster parent, now turned to his father's relatives for help and sympathy. He made various attempts to secure employment, but was unsuccessful. In 1833 he won with his "MS. Found in a Bottle" the fifty-dollar prize offered by *The Baltimore Saturday Visitor* for the best short story submitted. Poe sent in several stories and poems, and won two prizes, the second being twenty-five dollars for the best poem; but the judges refused to give both prizes to one competitor.

*His marriage: editor of "The Southern Literary Messenger."* It was at this period of his life that Poe's love for his cousin, Virginia Clemm, sprang up. She was a beautiful girl twelve or thirteen years of age at the time, and Poe desired even then to make her his wife. In 1835, when he had secured regular employment as editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger* of Richmond, Mrs. Clemm moved to that city, and Poe and Virginia were married, the latter being then not quite fourteen years old. Poe had a fixed salary now, and his success seemed assured. His articles, stories, and poems were attracting wide notice, and the circulation of the *Messenger* was rapidly increasing. But in 1837, perhaps on account of his irregular habits, he retired from the editorship which he had so acceptably filled for a year or more.

*Other editorial positions: more short stories.* Other editorial schemes were now tried. Poe went first to New York, then to Philadelphia, and did some literary hack work. In 1839 he obtained an editorial position on *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, but within a year he severed his connection with this periodical. He published in 1839 a volume of short stories called *Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque*. This volume brought him no money, but it broadened his fame. In 1841 he became editor of *Graham's Magazine*, and within a few months the circulation of this periodical increased from five thousand to thirty-seven thousand. Poe was now publishing some of his most original short stories, such as "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Masque of the Red Death," and others. In 1842 the erratic editor of *Graham's Magazine* was supplanted by R. W. Griswold.<sup>1</sup> The story goes that Poe disappeared for a few days, as was his peculiar custom, and when he returned to the office he found Griswold seated in the editorial chair. Without waiting for explanations, Poe turned on his heel and left the office. He continued, however, to be a contributor to this periodical.

"*The Raven*." Other ventures in editorial work and original schemes for founding an independent magazine occupied Poe at this time, but he seems never to have been able to put his plans into operation or to get on in the world. He gained wide fame through "The Raven," which was published in 1845, and a new edition of his verses with this poem leading in the title was issued in the fall of the same year. The next year, he took up his residence in the famous cottage at Fordham, near New York City. Here he tried to make a living by his contributions to various magazines, but he was continually yielding to his taste for drink and the use of opium. His young wife was desperately ill, his own health failed, and the whole

<sup>1</sup> A prominent early editor and anthologist, and Poe's literary executor.

family, including Mrs. Clemm, his mother-in-law, was for a time dependent upon public charity.

*Poe's last days.* In 1847 his young wife died. From this time on to the end of his life, Poe seems to have been a broken-hearted and hopeless man. Once or twice he made a real effort to throw off the terrible gloom and the distressing habits which had gained such a grip on him. His genius had not yet been exhausted, for he produced in these last years some of his most exquisite lyric poems, such as "Ulalume," "The Bells," and "Annabel Lee." He was unable to make a living, however. He tried to earn something by lecturing, but he failed to attract an audience in New York. He then went South, and here he met with more success. At Richmond his friends rallied to his support, and in a benefit lecture he realized about fifteen hundred dollars. He intended to return to New York, where Mrs. Clemm was anxiously waiting to hear from him and learn his plans, but he never reached that city. Mystery hangs about his last days. No one knows what happened to him after he left Richmond on September 30, 1849. When his friends found him three days later, he was lying unconscious in a saloon which had been used as one of the ward polling places in a city election at Baltimore. The physician who attended him, and had him taken to Washington Hospital, testified that Poe was not drunk but drugged. The theory now generally accepted is that he fell into the hands of a corrupt electioneering gang, was drugged and robbed, and then carried around from polling place to polling place and made to vote under false names. On Sunday morning, October 7, 1849, the ill-starred poet passed quietly away.

*Estimate of Poe's character.* Such was the life of the most erratic and most unfortunate of all American men of letters. There are those who condemn Poe as an ingrate, a degenerate, a reprobate; but those more charitably inclined consider him an unfortunate son of genius who was

unable, from his very nature, to control his actions. That he was unreliable, erratic, intemperate, his most ardent admirers will not deny. That he was dishonest, immoral, or licentious, his enemies will hesitate to affirm. That he was his own worst enemy, all will readily admit. His life is one to "point a moral or adorn a tale."

*Classification of Poe's works.* Poe's literary output clearly falls under three important headings,—namely, (1) his literary criticism, (2) his poetry, and (3) his short stories.

*Poe as a critic.* Poe is far and away the most important American literary critic of the first half of the nineteenth century. Of course much of his criticism is ephemeral, being made up for the most part of hastily written book reviews and general editorial and journalistic work contributed under pressure to the various magazines with which he was connected. He had a very keen critical sense and very definite critical principles, however, and on various occasions in set essays or lectures he enunciated these principles in such form as to make them of permanent value. For example, in writing a review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in 1842, he set forth very succinctly his theory of the short story, and his ideas have proved of such importance as to make this review a *locus classicus* in the criticism of this popular form of modern literary art.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no words written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design.

In his lecture on "The Poetic Principle" and in his essay entitled "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe has similarly



expounded his theories on the composition of poetry. He asserted that to produce the proper emotional effect a poem should not be primarily didactic or moral in aim, that is, its main aim should not be to teach a lesson or inculcate a moral; and it should not be unduly long or unduly brief. A long poem, he contended, is a contradiction of terms, for if the emotional tension is continued beyond a certain point it becomes painful rather than pleasurable, and thus the whole aim of poetry, which, according to Poe, is to give pleasure through the rhythmical creation of beauty, would be completely vitiated or destroyed. Similarly if a poem is so condensed as to become epigrammatic or too highly intellectualized, it precludes the pleasurable emotion which is essential to the poetic mood. He also held that sadness is an essential element in the highest poetic beauty and that the death of a beautiful woman is the most poetical of all themes. In "The Philosophy of Composition" Poe professes to explain in detail, by way of example, his own method of procedure in composing "The Raven," his most popular poem. Poe's theories of poetry are not to be accepted absolutely, because they are too narrow and confined in their point of view to be applied universally. In all fairness, however, it must be admitted that in his own compositions Poe succeeded admirably in vindicating his theories.

*Poe's poetry.* There are many critics, both at home and abroad, who esteem Poe as the greatest poetical genius produced in America. Unquestionably his lyrics possess a peculiarly haunting, mysterious, illusive, romantic beauty. Unquestionably, also, his poetry is unique and original in tone, subject-matter, and conception. Though he was strongly influenced by Byron, Hood, Coleridge, Shelley, and Tennyson among English poets, he disdained mere servile imitation, and he now and again essayed to invent an entirely new rhythmic form, as in the case of the original stanza employed in "The Raven." Poe's theories of poetry,

as explained above, were apparently made to fit his own practice. He wrote no poetry of a strictly epic character, he was not successful in his attempts at dramatic poetry, nor did he write any very long poems. But in the briefer lyric forms he admirably fulfilled his own theories. His best poems are literally "the rhythmic creation of beauty." They are rich in musical effects, brought about by the use of alliteration, onomatopœia, double and frequently repeated rimes, the refrain, or the repetend, and other musical devices. He is particularly happy in the invention and adaptation of proper names of a highly musical quality, such, for example, as Lenore, Eulalie, Annabel Lee, Ulalume, Ligeia, Israfel, Al Aaraaf, Auber, Yaanek. In his poetry as also in his prose tales he often strikes the solemn and lugubrious note of death, mystery, and the tomb, and the plaintive tone of unfulfilled desire and aspiration. He has filled his pages with wistful, mystical, ethereal figures, like flitting spirits from another world. A veil of romantic imagination is draped over all that he wrote, and his most characteristic productions are tinged with a quality of weirdness, melancholy, and unsatisfied longing thoroughly in harmony with his conception of what the highest poetry should be. Among his best poems for young readers to study in order to discover for themselves these qualities are "The Raven," "The Bells," "Eldorado," "Annabel Lee," "To Helen," "Israfel," "The Haunted Palace," "The Sleeper," "The City in the Sea," "The Coliseum."

*Classification of Poe's short stories.* Poe's most distinctive service to our literature is the work he did in developing and standardizing the short story as a distinct literary form. He not only laid down the strict canons for the structure of the modern short story, but he showed conclusively in his own practice the soundness and correctness of these canons. He was not the first of American short-story writers, for Irving and Hawthorne preceded him in the writing of excellent

short narratives which must be admitted into the modern art form known as the short story. But he certainly was the first to conceive the essential elements of this type of literary art, and he left the stamp of his own genius so distinctly upon it that his influence has been far greater than that of either of his distinguished predecessors. Of the many classifications of Poe's stories, perhaps the simplest and most easily remembered is the one which groups them into two principal classes and one subordinate class: (1) the analytical stories, or as he himself called them, the stories of ratiocination, including the strictly analytical stories like "The Gold Bug" and the detective stories, and the less important pseudo-scientific stories dealing with curious natural phenomena; and (2) the stories of horror and kindred emotions, in which resort is constantly made by Poe to themes of mystery, death, the supernatural, the fantastic, the weird, the uncanny. To these two principal classes may be added a third much inferior type of miscellaneous stories, including the minor sketches, such as "The Domain of Arnheim," "The Man of the Crowd"; the attempts at whimsical humor, such as "Loss of Breath," "The Devil in the Belfry," "X-ing a Paragrab"; and the pure allegories, "Silence" and "Shadow."

*Poe's analytical stories.* To the first group belong the cryptogrammatic or puzzle stories, of which "The Gold Bug" is typical. Poe had a wonderful analytic faculty, and he was exceedingly fond of working out cryptograms and puzzles and unraveling situations of mystery. He once dumfounded Charles Dickens by minutely forecasting the solution of the mystery of *Barnaby Rudge* long before the novel was completed. In applying his analytical faculty to the unraveling of famous murder mysteries and the like, Poe may be said to have invented the modern detective story. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and "The Purloined Letter" are his great

detective stories. M. Dupin, the famous French detective who applied with marvelous precision the simple laws of deductive logic to the solving of apparently baffling mysteries, has become the model for later writers of detective stories. Sir A. Conan Doyle, the English writer, has confessed his indebtedness to Poe in the creation of his own famous detective, Sherlock Holmes. Poe's stories of mystery are usually more attractive to young readers than his more artistic stories of horror. "The Gold Bug" is perhaps the prime favorite of all. To this group may be added the realistic pseudo-scientific stories of strange natural phenomena, such as "The Unparalleled Adventure of one Hans Pfaall," describing with Defoe-like plausibility a trip to the moon; "Narrative of A. Gordon Pym," Poe's longest story; and "A Descent into the Maelstrom." This last might readily be classed among the tales of fear or horror, but its chief interest seems to center in the realistic presentation of the laws of suction as exhibited in the huge whirlpool.

*Poe's tales of horror.* The second class contains Poe's most artistic work, for he was at his best in portraying the emotions of horror, fear, revenge, remorse of conscience, and the like. "The Fall of the House of Usher" is usually selected by critics as the supreme example of Poe's art in the short-story form. In this story Poe exemplified his own theories almost perfectly. He settled at once upon the "preconceived unique effect" of the peculiar type of horror produced by premature burial and sudden death. The dominant tone is struck in the initial sentence. The setting is one of gloom and mystery. The characters are obsessed with uncanny visions of trances, premature burials, and ghost-like resurrections from the grave. The storm without is but a lugubrious accompaniment to the strange phantasms of the diseased minds within. The lurid tarn, the miasmatic effluvia, and finally the blood-red moon are fit accessories to the scene. Every sound, every color, every

motion, every article of furniture, even the very atmosphere of the old mansion breathes of dankness and decay and death. The uncanny musical improvisations of Roderick Usher, his allegorical poem of "The Haunted Palace," the strange tale he is reading, the mysterious trance-death of his wraith-like sister Madeline, all conspire to enhance the wildly imaginative scene of the catastrophe. No sensitive person can read this tale without shuddering and trembling with fear. Scarcely inferior to "The Fall of the House of Usher" in artistic power are "The Cask of Amontillado," a story of revenge; "Ligeia," a mystical story of the reincarnation of a beautiful woman after death, claimed by Poe to be his most perfect story; "The Pit and the Pendulum," a story of the horrors of the medieval inquisition; "The Masque of the Red Death," a fantasia of death produced by a most repulsive disease; "William Wilson," a story dealing with the two natures in man, a theme which later attracted Robert Louis Stevenson in his powerful story "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." In tales like "The Black Cat" and "The Tell-tale Heart," though these are extremely fascinating to readers who delight in "thrillers," Poe has somewhat impaired the artistic effect by overdoing the horror motive. All in all, however, his horror stories are his most original contribution to American literature.<sup>1</sup>

**Henry Timrod.** Time has dealt both harshly and kindly with Henry Timrod (1829-1867). During his life this young South Carolinian suffered perhaps more than any one of his long-suffering fellow poets of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, but gradually his fame has expanded until now he is universally recognized as one of the four or five major poets of the South, being placed second only to Lanier and Poe. His work at times undoubtedly reaches a higher

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<sup>1</sup>The authoritative biography of Poe is that by George E. Woodberry, published in two volumes in 1909. An excellent brief treatment with a full bibliography by Dr. Killis Campbell may be found in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Vol. II, 1918.

level than that of his lifelong friend, Paul Hamilton Hayne, and the actual product of his thirty-seven years of ill-starred, poverty-stricken, disease-haunted life, though but a mere indication of what he might have accomplished under more favorable circumstances, yet gives him the right to an honorable place among the song-crowned sons of America.

*Timrod and Hayne.* Like Paul Hayne, Henry Timrod came of an excellent family, who in Revolutionary times had settled in the aristocratic and cultured city of Charleston, South Carolina. There was less than a month's difference between the birthdays of the two poets, Timrod being born on December 8, 1829, and Hayne on January 1, 1830. The boys became friends while attending the same private school in Charleston. They sat together for a time at the same desk and thus became intimate cronies.

*Timrod's education.* Although Timrod is described as a shy and timid youth, slow of speech but quick to learn, he was a thoroughly likable lad, and was a general favorite among his playmates. He took an active part in all outdoor sports and games, even in fighting, and he was fond of getting away from the city to take long rambles in the woods. When he was about seventeen years old, Timrod entered the University of Georgia with bright prospects. He made a fairly good record as a student, especially in the classics and other literary branches, and he spent much of his time in verse-making. His education was cut short through lack of means, however, and he left college without a degree. This was the first great disappointment of his life.

*Efforts to earn a livelihood.* Returning to Charleston, he entered the office of the Honorable J. L. Petigru, one of the best-known lawyers of the city, to prepare for a professional career; but he soon found law work distasteful and his preceptor uncongenial, and so he went out to earn his livelihood by tutoring in private families. Aspiring to a professorship in the classics, Timrod read diligently to prepare himself for



*From a portrait in the possession of the Charleston  
Library Society. Courtesy of the trustees*  
HENRY TIMROD

this work. But he was born under an unlucky star, it seems, for he was always approaching very near to, but never quite realizing, his most cherished desires. He found no suitable opening for a successful teaching career, and so for about ten years he toiled on at private tutoring here and there, wherever he found work.

*Timrod's early poems.* All this time poetry was his constant companion and consolation. He contributed both prose and verse to Southern literary journals, such as *Russell's Magazine* and *The Southern Literary Messenger*. He published a small volume of poems in 1860, and as Hayne said, "a better first volume of the kind has seldom appeared anywhere." In this volume were "The Lily Confidante," "A Vision of Poesy," and other worthy efforts. The book was well received by the reviewers, but there could not have been in the whole history of our country, perhaps, a more unpropitious moment for the publication of a volume of purely nature and personal lyrics. The people were in no mood to read love songs or disquisitions on the technique of poetry. Again we find disappointment and failure Timrod's portion, for there were few buyers of his modest volume, and consequently no material returns to the young author.

*Timrod's war poetry.* But hope smiled anew, and Timrod threw himself with intense zeal into the approaching struggle between the sections. He was too frail physically to bear arms or undergo the hardships of military life, but he went to the front as war correspondent for *The Charleston Mercury*, and was continually helping the Southern cause by composing the fiery war songs which gave him such wide fame in those years of struggle and which won for him a place in the foremost rank of Southern war poets. His "Ethnogenesis," written in February, 1861, on the birth of the Southern confederacy at Montgomery, Alabama, is a magnificent ode, and except for the fact that it celebrates a "lost cause" there is no doubt that long ago it would have



been recognized as one of our best productions in this kind of poetry. By far the best-known and most highly praised of Timrod's longer poems, "The Cotton Boll," was written about the same time. Though more strictly a nature poem, it concludes with a strong patriotic appeal, and is sometimes classed as a war poem. His "Carolina" and "A Cry to Arms" are stirring war songs. These poems, and many others like them, were widely circulated and enthusiastically received all over the South. So prominent had Timrod become as a representative Southern poet that in 1862 his friends proposed to bring out an illustrated edition of his poems in England, the artist Vizetelli, then war correspondent of *The London Illustrated News*, promising to supply the engravings. But in the stress of the war period the project fell through, and again, on the very threshold of success, our poet met his old foes, misfortune and disappointment.

*His marriage: "Katie."* Early in 1864 Timrod accepted an editorial position on *The South Carolinian* of Columbia, South Carolina, and with the prospect for permanent employment he married Miss Kate Goodwin, an English girl. This lady was the ideal of many of his poetic fancies and the inspiration of some of his best love poems. The long poem "Katie," which celebrates the beauty and charm of Miss Goodwin, is full of exquisite imagery and fine descriptive passages.

*Effects of the War on Timrod.* Little more than a year of happiness was vouchsafed him. On December 24, 1864, was born to him a son, the "Little Willie" whom he mourns in a pathetic lyric in less than a year after the child's birth. After the death of his son the poet lost much of his hopefulness and buoyancy. General Sherman's army had destroyed the beautiful city of Columbia almost exactly one year after the date of Timrod's marriage, and there was nothing left to him but poverty and distress from that time on to the

end of his life. He tried to bear up bravely. In a letter to his friend Hayne in 1866 he humorously refers to the gradual sale of the little furniture and silverware that had been saved from the wreck, to meet the bare necessities of existence: "We have—let me see—yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge bedstead." He continued his work on *The Carolinian*,—the paper had now been moved to Charleston,—but in a letter to Hayne he stated that for four months he had not received a dollar of his promised salary.

*Timrod's visit to Hayne.* One brief respite came before the end, when in the summer of 1867 Timrod, by the advice of his physicians and at the urgent solicitation of his old friend, went for two visits of about one month each to "Cope Hill," the home of Paul Hamilton Hayne, who was now living in the pine barrens of Georgia about sixteen miles from Augusta. Hayne writes sympathetically of their comradeship during these visits, both in his introductory memoir in the 1873 edition of Timrod's poems and in his beautiful reminiscences of the poet in "Under the Pine" and "By the Grave of Henry Timrod." From this visit, though greatly revived in spirits and apparently in health also, Timrod returned home to die. On September 13, he wrote to Hayne that he had suffered a severe hemorrhage from the lungs, and this was speedily followed by others, still more severe. He died October 7, 1867.

*Timrod's most perfect lyric.* Timrod's swan song, the "Ode" written to be sung at the memorial service for the Confederate dead in Magnolia Cemetery in 1867, is the most perfect of all his poems. In its classic restraint and finished beauty of style and in its subdued and pathetic expression of grief, it has rarely been equaled in American lyric poetry. The last stanza may be quoted as a memorial of Timrod's own life.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!  
There is no holier spot of ground  
Than where defeated valor lies,  
By mourning beauty crowned!

**Paul Hamilton Hayne.** Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830-1886), a nephew of the distinguished statesman and orator Robert Young Hayne, was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on New Year's Day, in 1830. His father, Lieutenant Paul Hamilton Hayne of the United States Navy, died when Paul was a mere infant, and the boy was brought up amid the wealth and luxury of his uncle's home. He received careful training in the best schools of Charleston, and he later entered Charleston College, from which he was graduated in 1850.

*Hayne's editorial work: his early volumes of poems.* Like many young Southerners of good family, Hayne prepared himself for the bar, but the call of poetry was stronger than that of the law. He became an associate editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, and later co-founder and editor of *Russell's Magazine*, which he made a decided success. He published a volume of poems in 1855, and three other volumes followed—*Sonnets and Other Poems* (1857), *Avolio and Other Poems* (1860), *Legends and Lyrics* (1872), and a complete edition of his poems, arranged by himself and published with an introductory biographical sketch by his friend and fellow poet, Margaret J. Preston, about four years before his death on July 6, 1886.

*Hayne's experiences during the War.* The Civil War came on just in time to interfere seriously with the development of his genius and the spread of his fame. True, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the struggle, writing a number of good war poems; but his muse was better suited to the home, the winter fireside, and the summer forest retreat than to the battle-field, the march, and the camp. In spite of his delicate constitution and frail physique he

volunteered his services to the Confederate cause, becoming an aide on Governor Pickens's staff.

*His life at "Copse Hill."* Home, library, wealth, all were swept away by the war. When peace came, Hayne moved with his devoted wife and only son, William Hamilton (who is himself a poet of no mean ability), into the pine barrens of Georgia, and settled in a little cottage—or, rather, log cabin—near Augusta. In this primitive home, which he named "Copse Hill," he spent the remainder of his life, striving to build up his health, and devoting himself exclusively to literature for a livelihood. His poems and prose articles found a ready reception in the magazines and periodicals of the North as well as in those of the South, but the remuneration was small and the family was forced to live under the severest economy.

*Value of Hayne's work.* Hayne's lyric genius has been highly praised, but he is still little more than a name to many readers, North and South. He wrote a large amount of poetry of a singularly uniform excellence, but no single poem so far superior to the great mass of his work as to make itself particularly noteworthy. Poets of far less literary merit are more generally known, through some single popular work, while Hayne, for the very reason of his uniform excellence, is neglected. He was not strikingly original in his poetry, but he had an individual note, and his art was rarely at fault. He deserves a more generous and general recognition than he has received. His longer narrative poems and his dramatic pieces are not without merit, but his best work is undoubtedly in the purer lyric and descriptive types. Especially praiseworthy are his sonnets, of which he wrote considerably more than one hundred. Maurice Thompson said, "As a sonneteer, Hayne was strong, ranking well with the best in America"; and again, "I can pick twenty of Hayne's sonnets to equal almost any in the language"; and Professor Painter adds,



*From a photograph. Courtesy of the poet's son,  
William Hamilton Hayne*

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

"It is hardly too much to claim that Hayne is the prince of American sonnetcers."

*His life a poem.* Paul Hamilton Hayne lived as he wrote—simply, purely, bravely. The latter part of his life was marked by struggle and heartache, privation and disease; yet he kept up his courage and maintained a calm, sweet temper to the end, making of his own life, perhaps, a more beautiful poem than any he ever penned.<sup>1</sup>

**Sidney Lanier.** In one of his earlier poems, called "Life and Song," Sidney Lanier (1842-1881) says that none of the poets has ever yet so perfectly united the ideal of his minstrelsy with the reality of his daily life as to cause the world in wonder to exclaim:

"His song was only living aloud,  
His work, a singing with his hand!"

But so nearly did Lanier himself come to a realization of his ideal of "a perfect life in perfect labor writ," that the ever-growing circle of his admirers is ready to place him among that very small number of the gifted sons of genius who have nobly conceived and nobly striven toward the ideal. Outwardly his life was a hard one. The story of his struggle against poverty, disease, and adversity often has been told, but not too often, for it is as inspiring as it is pathetic. It is the old, old story of genius making its way in spite of all obstructions.

*Lanier's early life: his musical gifts.* Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His father, Robert S. Lanier, was a fairly successful lawyer who was able to keep his family in that moderate degree of comfort which seems conducive to the highest happiness in home life. The house in which Sidney was born was the home at that time of his grandfather, Sterling Lanier, and when

<sup>1</sup>Perhaps the best essays on Hayne are those by Margaret Junkin Preston in the latest edition of his poems [1882] and by William Hamilton Hayne in *Lippincott's Magazine* for December, 1892.



SIDNEY LANIER

this first grandson was a few months old, his parents moved to Griffin, Georgia, returning to Macon a year or two later. Here their parlor was later the scene of many a hospitable gathering of friends and neighbors for impromptu family musical entertainments. The two boys, as well as the mother, were talented in music, and each contributed to

the home concerts. The Laniers had in previous generations been distinguished for their attainments in various kinds of artistic expression, particularly in painting and in music. Sidney early showed his remarkable musical talent, becoming a performer on almost all kinds of instruments at an early age, learning with that ease and rapidity which come only from natural genius. He was so fascinated by the music of the violin that he would sometimes fall into deep reveries or trances as he played. His father, fearing the power of the instrument over the boy and not wishing him to become a professional musician, forbade him to practice on it; and Sidney turned to the instrument which after the violin most appealed to him, the flute. On this he produced marvelous effects, not only fascinating his schoolmates at Oglethorpe College and his fellow soldiers during the Civil War by his wonderful mastery of this instrument, but later earning as a professional the distinction of being the greatest flute-player in the world. The sweetness, mellowness, and passionate appeal of the tones of his flute are said to have held all hearers spellbound. He could imitate bird notes with ease, and was also able to obtain in his extemporized variations and embellishments tones suggestive of those of the violin.

*His call to be a writer.* But later on we find the conviction taking possession of Lanier that he must be a poet. He writes to his father, "Gradually I find that my whole soul is merging itself into this business of writing." He had begun while at college to test his powers as a writer. He was ambitious to prepare himself by study in Germany for a college professorship, but the war came on, and like many another talented young Southerner, he threw himself with great enthusiasm into the cause of the Confederacy. He entered the army as a private, and rather than accept promotion which would separate him from his brother Clifford, he remained such. Near the close of the war



when both he and Clifford were put in charge of blockade-running vessels, Sidney was captured and confined for five months in the Federal prison at Point Lookout. During the war, Lanier did not neglect his mental development. He read all the books he could lay hands on, studied German, translated a few poems from foreign languages, and played on his beloved flute whenever he had an opportunity to do so. He began work on a novel in which he made use of some of the experiences and aspirations of this period. This immature production was published shortly after the war, under the title of *Tiger Lilies*.

*Teaching and writing poetry.* Returning home from prison just in time to see his mother before her death, he sadly set to work to make a living for himself and thus to help retrieve the broken fortunes of the family. He began teaching as a tutor on a plantation near Macon, and then he became a clerk in the old Exchange Hotel at Montgomery, Alabama. In 1867 he accepted the principalship of the village school at Prattville, Alabama, and it was while he was occupying this position that he married Miss Mary Day, of Macon, Georgia. During the first year of his married life Lanier suffered his first prostration from hemorrhage of the lungs. To this distressful period belong several Reconstruction outcries, of which only two, "Tyranny" and "The Raven Days," were included in the 1884 edition of his poems, but several others, notably "Our Hills," are included in the latest edition of his complete *Poems* (1916). Some years later the rich emotions incident to his love, courtship, and marriage blossomed forth into many beautiful tributes to the object of his lifelong devotion. No more exquisite love poem, no finer tribute to a wife, is to be found in our literature than "My Springs."

*Lanier as a lawyer: his letters.* After his marriage, Lanier decided to become a lawyer in order to be able to provide more adequately for his family. He went to Macon to study

with the firm of which his father was a member, and he was shortly afterwards admitted to the bar. Though his success was remarkable and immediate, he did not practice long, for the demands of the legal profession were destructive of his now feeble vitality, a public address being likely to induce hemorrhage, and prolonged desk work a steady lowering of his strength at all points. And yet he felt chained by moral obligation to consent to his father's urgent plea that he continue in his law work for the sake of his family's support. At last, after five years of painful sacrifice, disease freed him to devote himself to his beloved arts, music and poetry. He said he had in his heart a thousand songs that were oppressing him because they remained unsung. Relinquishing his law practice, he sought health by rest and travel. He spent some time in San Antonio, Texas, in the winter of 1872, and here he made the first notable public display of his remarkable talent for flute playing. He wrote some for publication, but the best products of this period are his tender love letters to his wife. In fact, Lanier was one of the finest letter writers of the nineteenth century. The charm and fullness with which the poet expressed himself by means of the delicate art of personal correspondence have rarely been equaled and never surpassed in American literature.

*Lanier as a musician.* The next year he decided to go to the North or East, where he could find encouragement and opportunity to devote himself to the twin arts of music and poetry. He was engaged as first flute in the Peabody Symphony Concerts in Baltimore. His ability as a musician was soon recognized. He was not merely a virtuoso, but a composer and master of the science of music. And so with flute and pen as the means by which he earned a scanty livelihood, he spent the remaining nine years of his life in the musical and scholarly atmosphere of Baltimore and other cities. He soon made warm friends of many notable persons,



HOME OF SIDNEY LANIER, MACON, GEORGIA

such as Bayard Taylor, Charlotte Cushman, Gibson Peacock of Philadelphia, Leopold Damrosch, President Gilman, and others. Again he was under the necessity of being separated from his family; but while these enforced periods of separation were extremely painful to the poet and his wife, the general public may count them fortunate, in that they were the occasion for some of the most beautiful of his letters on music and kindred arts.

*His poems of 1876-77.* The later years of the poet's life, while consciously devoted to art, were a struggle against poverty and disease. In the summer of 1876-77 his health became so greatly impaired that his physicians and friends prevailed on him to go to Tampa, Florida, to recuperate. In the leisure of this visit Lanier produced many notable poems, among them being "Tampa Robins," "Beethoven," "The Waving of the Corn," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," "The Stirrup Cup," "An Evening Song," "The Mocking-Bird." On his return to Baltimore in the spring, he tried to find some employment to supplement the meager income from his position in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. But all his efforts and those of his friends seemed of no avail. It was at this time that what Professor Mims calls "perhaps the most pathetic words in all his letters" were written by the poet: "Altogether, it seems as if there wasn't any place for me in the world, and if it were not for May [his wife] I should certainly quit it, in mortification at being so useless."

*Lanier's lectures on literature.* Finally a friend hit upon the idea of organizing a private class for a series of lectures on English poetry. Lanier had been taking every advantage of the excellent libraries and opportunities for culture in Baltimore, and he had developed rapidly under the inspiration of the literary and artistic life of that city. He was reading deeply into the Old and Middle English and the Elizabethan writers. His sympathetic interpretations

attracted a goodly number of students to his first class, and the success of these private lectures soon gave him an opportunity to present the results of his investigations in a regular series of lectures in Johns Hopkins University. It was in 1879 that President Gilman appointed him to a lectureship in English literature. Many years later Lanier's son, Henry Wysham Lanier, collected the lectures and published them in two large volumes under the title of *Shakspeare and His Forerunners* (1902).

*Lanier's prose works.* During all this time Lanier was turning out many excellent works, both creative and editorial. His *Boy's Froissart*, *Boy's King Arthur*, *Boy's Percy*, *Boy's Mabinogion* are still standard juvenile books. He was gradually working out in concrete examples of poetic composition his theories of the interrelationship of music and poetry. He published two critical volumes, *The Science of English Verse* and *The English Novel and its Development*. In the first he set forth the interrelations of music and poetry, and in the second he proclaimed the novel as the most characteristic form of modern literary art and George Eliot its most prominent exponent.

*His best poems.* Lanier's theory of the close relationship between music and poetry was well nigh justified in such of his own poems as "The Symphony," "The Ballad of Trees and the Master," "Psalm of the West," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," "The Marshes of Glynn," and "Sunrise." "Sunrise" and "The Marshes of Glynn," two of the four completed "hymns of the marshes," a distinctly original series of poems projected by Lanier on the beautiful salt sea-marshes near Brunswick, Georgia, are usually designated as Lanier's supreme attainment in lyrical poetry. The first of these contains some magnificent lines and some wonderful melody, but it is perhaps written in a too tense and ecstatic mood to be thoroughly artistic. Of "The Marshes of Glynn" Professor Edwin Mims says that one could single

it out "with assurance that there is something so individual and original about it, and that, at the same time, there is such a roll and range of verse in it, that it will surely live not only in American poetry but in English."

*Lanier's last days.* In 1880 Lanier faithfully filled his engagements at the university, but it is said that his hearers were in constant dread lest each hour should be his last. It was only by the conquering power of his will that he kept himself alive at all. He rode to the hall in a closed carriage, and sat during the hour, being unable to stand to deliver his lectures. In 1881 he sought relief in the mountains near Asheville in North Carolina. His father and his brother Clifford were with him for several weeks, but only his wife was there when the end came. William Hayes Ward, in his memorial essay, which is attached as introduction to the volume of Lanier's *Poems*, quotes Mrs. Lanier's own words: "We are left alone with one another. On the last night of the summer comes a change. His love and immortal will hold off the destroyer of our summer yet one more week, until the forenoon of September 7th, and then falls the frost, and that unfaltering will renders its supreme submission to the adored will of God." He was buried in Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, the beloved city of his adoption.<sup>1</sup>

#### MINOR SOUTHERN POETS

**The ante-bellum minor poets.** Poe is the only early Southerner who would receive unanimous suffrage as a major American poet. But in the ante-bellum period, beginning with Francis Scott Key (1780-1843), of Maryland, whose fame rests upon the fact that he wrote during the War of 1812 what has since become our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," the South produced a large number

<sup>1</sup>The most satisfactory life of Lanier is that by Edwin Mims. Other noteworthy studies are those by Professor Morgan Callaway, Jr., in his *Select Poems of Sidney Lanier*, and by Henry Nelson Snyder in his *The Spiritual Message of Lanier*.

of minor poets. Some of them have thrown off single lyrics of admirable grace and sweetness, others have poured forth volumes of mediocre poetry of merely local interest or sectional pride, and still others have produced a considerable amount of poetry worthy of general national attention. Among the single-poem class of ante-bellum Southern poets may be named Richard Henry Wilde (1789-1847), of Georgia, whose beautiful lyric, "My Life is Like the Summer Rose," is included in practically every American anthology; William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), of South Carolina, better known as a novelist, but remembered also for a few of his many poems, and particularly for his poetical characterization of General Francis Marion in "The Swamp Fox"; Alexander Beaufort Meek (1814-1865), born in South Carolina but associated almost entirely with Alabama, author of the stirring patriotic lyric "Land of the South" and two excellent bird lyrics, "The Mocking-Bird" and "Song of the Blue Bird"; Theodore O'Hara (1820-1867), of Kentucky, whose "The Bivouac of the Dead" is recognized among the noblest of our elegies or dirges; Edward Coate Pinkney (1802-1828), of Maryland, whose lyric, "A Health," called forth the highest praise from Poe and is still greatly admired by all lovers of musical verse; Philip Pendleton Cooke (1816-1850), brother of the novelist, John Esten Cooke, of Virginia, whose "Florence Vane" is but one of several excellent lyrics in his volume called *Froissart Ballads and Other Poems* (1847).

**Civil War poets.** Besides Henry Timrod, who is treated elsewhere in this volume, the South produced a number of other war poets. Albert Pike (1809-1891), born in Boston but for fifty years of his life identified with the South, particularly Arkansas, wrote a great deal of poetry, most of it of an imitative classic quality. His "Ode to the Mocking-Bird," his fiery war song "Dixie" (not the swift, rollicking dialect words usually sung to the well-known air), and his

melancholy lyric called "Every Year" may be read as examples of his best lyric productions. Dr. Francis Orray Ticknor (1822-1874) is remembered chiefly as the author of the stirring lyric of heroism, "Little Giffen," which has been named among the half dozen best short poems in American literature. The natural and spontaneous poetry of this good physician, whose home near Columbus, Georgia, was known as a refuge for the sick and wounded Confederate soldiers during the Civil War, should have long ago received fuller recognition from our literary historians. James Ryder Randall (1839-1908), of Maryland, sang himself into fame with the fervent war lyric, "Maryland, My Maryland!" which has been called "The Marseillaise of the Confederacy." Margaret Junkin Preston (1820-1897) was born in Pennsylvania, but married Colonel J. T. L. Preston, of the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia, and devoted her entire life and talents to the Southern cause. She wrote a large amount of narrative and lyric verse. Her best work was a number of lyrics commemorative of Southern war heroes, such as "Gone Forward" and "The Shade of the Trees," commemorating the deaths of Generals Lee and Jackson respectively. John Reuben Thompson (1823-1873), of Virginia, who was for fourteen years editor of the most important literary journal of the South, *The Southern Literary Messenger*, is chiefly remembered for his war lyrics, among which may be singled out "Music in Camp," "Ashby," and "The Death of Stuart." Abram Joseph Ryan (1839-1886), better known from his priestly office as Father Ryan, is the best beloved of all the Southern Civil War poets. He was born in Virginia, but lived in several Southern states, his longest residence in any one place being at Mobile, Alabama, in connection with the noted old Catholic church of St. Mary's in that city. His best known lyrics are "The Sword of Lee," "The Mystic," and "The Conquered Banner." He also





ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN

*From a photograph*

wrote a long narrative poem in blank verse, which, though not of the very highest poetical merit, has a pathetic personal interest. It is called "Their Story Runneth Thus,"

a story of self-renunciation and sacrifice, full of Roman Catholic coloring, and supposed to be based on the poet's own personal experience in renouncing his early love for a beautiful girl, who afterwards, upon his advice, became a nun. Father Ryan's verse is the simple and natural outpouring of a pure and loyal soul, and it touches the hearts of many readers who would not be moved by work of a more finished literary art.

**Post-bellum poets.** Sidney Lanier and Paul Hamilton Hayne are treated elsewhere at more length. The minor Southern singers that have appeared since the Civil War are quite too numerous to be spoken of in detail. Irwin Russell and Madison Cawein, however, are distinctive enough to demand special mention; a few of the other later poets may be treated more briefly.

**Irwin Russell.** The story of Irwin Russell (1853-1879), "the boy poet of Mississippi," is a pathetic one and may easily be used to "point a moral or adorn a tale." He was born in Port Gibson, Mississippi, where his father was a practicing physician. At the age of three months the child suffered a severe attack of yellow fever, and it is thought that his frail constitution in after life was the result of this early infection. He was sent to the schools of St. Louis, Missouri, after which he returned to Mississippi and prepared himself for the bar, being admitted to the practice by a special act of the Mississippi legislature two years before he reached his majority. His mental acuteness was remarkable. He was also talented in music, being able to play on several instruments with ease. His fondness for the banjo led, by a happy accident, to his composition or improvisation of negro songs similar to those he heard the servants singing around his father's home. Many of these humorous negro songs were afterward published in *Scribner's Monthly*, beginning in 1876. This was an entirely new type of writing, and it at once attracted other writers into the same field.

Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page have both acknowledged their indebtedness to and their appreciation



*Courtesy of Professor A. A. Kern*  
IRWIN RUSSELL

of the art of Russell in negro dialect. The young writer was attracted to New York City to continue his literary activities. In the meantime he had lost his father, and he was now practically alone and adrift in the world. Yielding to his desire for the use of drugs and intoxicants, he soon broke down in health. He fell into a serious illness and was impelled by remorse to leave New York, where his new

friends were charitably taking care of him. He worked his way down to New Orleans on a coast steamer, and tried to recover his health by abstinence and thus reinstate himself in the profession of journalism, becoming for a time a reporter on the New Orleans *Picayune*. But Fate was against him; he died, leaving his promise of greater work unfulfilled.

*Russell's dialect poems.* The whole output of Russell's genius makes up but a thin volume of verse. His most notable single production in negro dialect is the operetta called "Christmas Night in the Quarters." "In this production," says Joel Chandler Harris in his introduction of the volume published after Russell's death, "Russell combines the features of a character study with a series of bold and striking plantation pictures that have never been surpassed. In this remarkable group,—if I may so term it,—the old life before the war is reproduced with a fidelity that is marvelous." "The Song of the Banjo," a lyric in this operetta, is perhaps the best known of Russell's poems, but "Nebuchadnezzar," "Mahsr John," "Business in Mississippi," and many others are equally amusing.

**Madison Cawein.** Madison Julius Cawein (1865-1914), of Kentucky, the most prolific and all in all the most sensuously lyrical of recent American poets, should be more widely known than he is at present. He published during his life an enormous amount of verse, issuing some twenty-odd original books of poetry besides a volume of selected poems. He found his subjects largely in his minute observations of Nature and in his romantic treatment of the outdoor world. Naturally in the large number of poems which he published there will be found many trivial themes and some artificial conceits. But taken at his best, Cawein deserves the high praise which William Dean Howells and other critics have accorded him. He has been called "the Keats of Kentucky," and his enthusiastic delight in nature and his love for foreign and native myths give point to the

comparison. Cawein wrote too much, however, and his lack of restraint and of severe self-criticism has doubtless injured his fame. Nevertheless, it is believed that he will be remembered as one of the most truly gifted of American nature lyrists.

**Other lyrists.** John Bannister Tabb (1845-1909), of Virginia, was just old enough to enter the Confederate Army toward the close of the Civil War. He was associated with Sidney Lanier as a prisoner of war, and on several occasions he voiced his appreciation of that poet's magnetic and chivalrous personality. After the war he became a Roman Catholic priest and devoted himself largely to teaching in Catholic schools. He wrote many brief almost epigrammatic lyrics, all of them being decidedly pleasing and satisfying to the ear as well as stimulating and suggestive to the imagination. Samuel Minturn Peck (1854-), of Alabama, is one of the cleverest of all our writers of light society verse. His lyrics have a fascinating lilt and a charming melody, and are at the same time interfused with a spirit of cavalier gallantry, quiet humor, and an amusing touch of playful satire and badinage. His best known lyrics, perhaps, are "The Grapevine Swing," "Aunt Jemima's Quilt," "Grandmother's Turkey-tail Fan," "Doctor Bessie Brown," and "The Southern Girl." Robert Burns Wilson (1850-1916) and Cale Young Rice (1872-), both of Kentucky, have written excellent lyric verse. The last-named poet is just now in the prime of his life, and he has a decidedly promising future before him, if we may judge by the quality of his already published poems and plays. Judge Walter Malone (1866-1915), although born in Mississippi, has made his home almost entirely in Memphis, Tennessee, and is recognized as a prominent poet of his adopted state. His best known, though not his most artistic, poem is called "Opportunity." Frank Lebby Stanton (1857-), born in South Carolina, but usually thought of as a Georgian on account

of his long connection with *The Atlanta Constitution*, is a newspaper poet of wide popularity. In his daily column of verse and humorous skits in the *Constitution*, he has inevitably turned out many mere space fillers; but there is a distinct singing quality to his verse; and when the best of his songs shall have been selected from the vast amount he has produced, there will be a considerable volume of worthy poems of his to transmit to posterity. Stark Young (1881-), of Mississippi, now Professor of English literature at Amherst College, Massachusetts, has published some finely modulated lyric verse in his volume, *The Blind Man at the Window and Other Poems* (1906). He has also written a poetic drama, "Guenevere," (1906), and several meritorious one-act plays in the volume *Addio, Mardretta, and Other Plays* (1911). William Alexander Percy (1885-), is an equally promising Mississippi poet. His *Sappho in Leukas* (1915) shows both taste and power, and we may confidently expect still better work from his pen. Conrad Potter Aiken (1889-), of Savannah, Georgia, is another young poet of talent. His three volumes—*Earth Triumphant* (1914), *Nocturne of Remembered Spring* (1917), and *The Charnel Rose* (1918)—contain both narrative and lyric verse of surprisingly good quality.

#### SOUTHERN WRITERS OF FICTION

**Introductory statement.** Aside from Poe, whose important work in the American short story is treated elsewhere, the writers of fiction in the South prior to the Civil War were few in number and of little importance. John Pendleton Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms, and John Esten Cooke are the only ante-bellum Southerners who deserve attention in this field of literature. Since the Civil War, however, a large number of novelists and local-color short-story writers have sprung up in the South. The following list of names will indicate the importance of the

Southern group among our popular writers of fiction during the last half century: Richard Malcolm Johnston, F. Hopkinson Smith, Joel Chandler Harris, George Washington Cable, James Lane Allen, Charles Egbert Craddock, Thomas Nelson Page, John Fox, Jr., Grace King, Ruth McEnery Stuart, Mary Johnston, Ellen Glasgow, Henry Sydnor Harrison, and O. Henry.

**John Pendleton Kennedy.** John Pendleton Kennedy (1795-1870) was born in Baltimore, and educated there for the bar. He later became Secretary of the Navy under President Fillmore. Literature was to him, as to all Southern gentlemen of his time, a mere side issue or pastime. His serious work was in law and politics, but he found time to do a great deal of literary reading and to write three volumes of fiction. His first book, *Swallow Barn, or A Sojourn in the Old Dominion* (1832), is a series of sketches held together by a slight plot element. It succeeds admirably in its attempt to present accurately and vividly the early social life of Virginia. Kennedy's most pretentious novel is *Horse-shoe Robinson, or A Tale of the Tory Ascendancy* (1835). The setting is in the South Carolina of the Revolution, and the stirring scenes of those early times are portrayed with wonderful naturalness and realism if not with perfect historic accuracy. The hero, an unlettered but valorous and resourceful patriot, is one of the really notable character creations in our early fiction. The scene of another historical romance, *Rob of the Bowl* (1838), is laid in colonial Maryland during the days of the proprietary government, and the book is said to present a trustworthy portrait of colonial life. Kennedy was one of the first men to give generous encouragement to Poe, and he had much intercourse and correspondence with other distinguished literary men both in America and in England. His connection with Thackeray is particularly interesting; it is claimed that he wrote, or at least provided the material

for, the fourth chapter of Thackeray's novel, *The Virginians*. Had he devoted himself more to literature and less to law and politics, Kennedy would doubtless have attained a much higher rank among American writers than he is now accorded.

**William Gilmore Simms.** Next to Poe, William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) was the most potent literary influence in Southern literature in the period immediately preceding the Civil War. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1806 and was left an orphan at an early age. He managed to prepare himself for the practice of law, but he was soon attracted into authorship, beginning as a newspaper editor. He gathered around him at Charleston a coterie of young writers and acted as a kind of patron or literary adviser to them. Among the most prominent of these were the poets Paul Hamilton Hayne and Henry Timrod. About 1833 he began the publication of his long series of romances, *Guy Rivers, a Tale of Georgia* (1834), being his first successful long story. This was quickly followed by *The Yemassee, a Romance of South Carolina* (1835) and *The Partisan, a Tale of the Revolution* (1835), his two best stories. It is impossible here to follow Simms through his long and active literary and political career. He was a loyal and enthusiastic Southerner, and espoused with almost partisan zeal practically every important social and political movement in which his section became involved. He was a prodigious composer, writing and publishing nearly a hundred volumes in the various kinds or types of literary composition. The plain fact is that he wrote too much and too rapidly to give his work that polish and finish of style which is essential to literary masterpieces. He had a marvelously fertile imagination and could turn out an enormous amount of exciting romance within the space of a few hours. He rarely corrected or revised his first drafts, and hence his works are full of the usual errors due to haste and over-confidence. But under the heat of his fertile imagination he could write



interesting, if somewhat melodramatic, narratives; and his conception of character, his descriptions of nature, and his presentations of intense dramatic situations show evidences of strong native power and insight. He has been called the "Cooper of the South," and his Indian stories, his tales of adventure, and his historical romances may be compared not altogether unfavorably with Cooper's work in these fields.

**John Esten Cooke.** John Esten Cooke (1830-1886), "a Virginian of Virginians," won his reputation as a romancer before the Civil War, but he may also be classed among the post-bellum writers, for he wrote many popular stories based on his experiences and observations of that memorable struggle. He did not take a college education as did his elder brother, the poet Philip Pendleton Cooke, but decided to prepare immediately for the practice of law in his father's office. However, he devoted much of his time to general reading and literary work. In 1854 he published perhaps his most important book, *The Virginia Comedians*, a novel dealing with life in the Old Dominion just prior to the Revolution. When the Civil War opened, he enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army and was soon promoted to the rank of major. He served as a staff officer with Generals Stuart and Pendleton, and thus was enabled to come into personal contact with a number of the leading Confederate generals. He kept full notes of his experiences, and later he used this material in writing his stirring romances of the Civil War. Even during the war Cooke was constantly writing. He published in 1863, less than a year after Jackson's death, a biography of the great Southern general. *Surry of Eagle's Nest* appeared in 1866 and won immediate popularity in the South, and is still frequently read by Southern youths. Then followed a long series of tales full of dramatic adventure and highly colored war romance, such as *Mohun*, *Hilt to Hilt*, *Wearing the Gray*,

*Hammer and Rapier* (Grant and Lee). These later works, though highly entertaining to young Southern readers, cannot be classed as first-rate literature. The straining after exciting incident and melodramatic situation and the lack of proper perspective and massing are the chief faults of this kind of fiction.

**Wide geographical distribution of later fiction writers.**

The wide geographical distribution of the later Southern writers of fiction indicates the relative importance of the element of localism in their work. Nearly every state and nearly every type of life in the South has had its exploiter in fiction. Beginning with the Atlantic coast and moving westward, we may take a rapid glance over the field and at the same time preserve something of a chronological sequence.

**F. Hopkinson Smith.** Francis Hopkinson Smith (1838-1915) was born in Maryland, but he moved to New York to find work and later became quite a traveler, and his work deals almost as largely with New England as with the South. He seems, too, to belong to the very latest school of writers of fiction, for he did not begin to write stories until he was past fifty. He spent a busy life as a constructive engineer, a painter, a lecturer, and a writer. In *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* (1891) he succeeded in drawing a charming portrait of an old-time Southern gentleman. So delicately humorous, vividly realistic, and thoroughly human is this idealized portrait that one is almost willing to place Colonel Carter among the few great character creations in our literature. Smith's later novels, which may be classed as realistic romances, are written in an optimistic and pleasing style. *Caleb West*, *Master Diver* (1898), which draws upon Smith's experience as a constructive engineer in marine work, *The Fortunes of Oliver Horn* (1902), *Kennedy Square* (1911), and *Felix O'Day* (1915) may be mentioned as the best of his numerous other novels. Smith was also a

painter of considerable talent, and a number of his later books are illustrated with his own drawings and sketches.

**Thomas Nelson Page.** In recent years Virginia has been perhaps the most fertile Southern state in the production of story writers. Thomas Nelson Page (1853-) began about 1884 to write negro dialect stories for the magazines, "Marse Chan" being the first of these to attract general attention. *In Ole Virginia* (1887) is the title of his first volume. It is composed almost entirely of negro dialect stories, and the consensus of opinion is that Page has never surpassed, if indeed he has ever again quite reached, the high mark of artistic excellence which he set in these idealized portraits of the old-time Southern master and slave. Besides "Marse Chan," prime favorites in this first volume are "Meh Lady," "Ole 'Stracted," and "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin." "Two Little Confederates" and "The Burial of the Guns" (1894) are two good Civil War short stories accredited to Page, *Elsket* (1892) is a romantic story, the scene of which is laid in Norway. In 1898 Page published his best long novel, *Red Rock, a Chronicle of Reconstruction*. It is a gripping story of those trying days in the South when the Northern carpet-bagger was imposing himself upon the Southern white people and inciting the negroes to open opposition to their former masters. His later novels are somewhat disappointing, but the two volumes just mentioned are classics of their kind and will doubtless long retain a place of high distinction in the list of the best American fiction.

**Other Virginia story writers.** Three Virginia women have attracted a wide circle of delighted readers; namely, Molly Elliot Seawell (1860-1916), author of *Throckmorton* (1890), *The Sprightly Romance of Marsac* (1896), and many other novels; Mary Johnston (1870-), for a number of years a resident of Alabama, author of *Prisoners of Hope* (1898), *To Have and To Hold* (1899), *Audrey* (1902), tales of Colonial Virginia; *Lewis Rand* (1908), a tale of Virginia in the early

nineteenth century; and *The Long Roll* (1911) and *Cease Firing* (1912), Civil War stories introducing Generals Jackson and Lee respectively, besides several other romances; and Ellen Glasgow (1874-), author of *The Voice of the People* (1900), *The Battle Ground* (1902), *The Deliverance* (1904), and other novels. In the past ten years Henry Sydnor Harrison of Richmond has won popularity by his interesting and carefully written novels, *Queed* (1911), *V. V.'s Eyes* (1913), and *Angela's Business* (1916). He seems to be the most promising of the younger Southern novelists.

**Frances Hodgson Burnett.** Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-), though born in Manchester, England, came to America when she was sixteen, lived for some time in Tennessee and other Southern states, and finally in Washington, D. C., so that she may be classed as a Southern writer. Her first successful novel, *That Lass o' Lowries* (1877), deals with the working classes in England, but she wrote many stories of American life, such as *Through One Administration* (1883), dealing with the social and political life in Washington City, and *In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim* (1899), the scene of which is laid in Tennessee during the Civil War. The best known of all Mrs. Burnett's stories, however, is the juvenile classic, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886). The long golden curls, the velvet knickerbocker suit, and the broad white collar of the seven-year-old boy hero became a fad and furnished a model for many a fond American mother. The tender moral tone of the book has also helped to give it vogue among American readers.

**Richard Malcolm Johnston.** Among Georgia writers of fiction Richard Malcolm Johnston (1822-1898), for some years prior to the Civil War a professor of English in the University of Georgia and afterward principal of boarding schools for boys in Sparta, Georgia, and in Baltimore, Maryland, wrote a series of character sketches dealing in a realistic and humorous fashion with Georgia rural types. These

were collected and published in several volumes, the best known being *Dukesborough Tales, or Old Times in Middle Georgia* (1871). The realism and accuracy of his portrayals of life and character make his works a trustworthy source for the study of social conditions in the South during the last half of the nineteenth century, but the lack of plot interest and the absence of the glamour of romance have led to an almost total neglect of these books by modern readers. Another early Georgia writer, Judge Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (1790-1870), wrote a similar series of excellent realistic sketches and published them in a volume called *Georgia Scenes* (1835). The large infusion of genuine humor in his work has kept it alive even to the present day.

**Joel Chandler Harris.** So well has Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) succeeded in exploiting the interesting field of negro folklore which by chance he stumbled into, and also so admirably has he portrayed other phases of life in the South, that some critics are ready to accord him a place among the major American writers of recent years. By his simple, unassuming, and yet thoroughly artistic style, by his keen observations of man and nature, by the richness and sweetness of his humor and pathos, by the constantly sane and healthful attitude toward life which he maintained, and also by his powerful and apparently almost unconscious character creation, Harris seems destined to take his place among the distinctively original writers that America has so far produced. His realm was a restricted one, it is true, for he did not succeed with the full-scope novel; but he has worked his own particular vein with such painstaking and loving artistry that he has succeeded in adding a new domain to our literature, that of the folktale retold in artistic setting, and he has certainly added at least one immortal portrait to our gallery of notable characters in fiction—namely, "Uncle Remus."

*His preparation.* Harris was born near Eatonton, a village

in Putnam County, Georgia. He obtained an elementary education at rural schools and at an Eatonton academy. When he was fourteen, Harris became an assistant printer on a journal called *The Countryman*, edited by J. A. Turner on his plantation in Putnam County. Here the boy may be said to have completed his education by setting type, running the press, and doing the general work around the printing office. Mr. Turner encouraged him, allowed him free use of his own library, and eventually accepted contributions from him. But the best part of young Harris's education was gleaned from sources outside of books. He studied closely the life and nature about him, he listened to the old negroes tell their fascinating animal tales, and he absorbed the language, superstitions, and habits of his colored as well as his white neighbors. In a book called *On the Plantation*, written many years later and dedicated to Mr. Turner, Harris has woven his personal experiences into a wonderfully delightful picture of this old-time life on a Georgia plantation. Then came Sherman's army marching through Georgia, and the old life was a closed book. Harris later became a newspaper man, working on several papers and finally settling down to a long journalistic career on *The Atlanta Constitution*. He lived a quiet and retired life at his home called "The Wren's Nest" in the suburbs of Atlanta, rarely appearing in any public capacity other than that of his daily editorial contributions to the *Constitution*.

*His Uncle Remus stories.* It was while he was serving as a reporter on the *Constitution* that his opportunity came. One of the regular contributors who had been writing negro dialect sketches for the paper retired, and Harris was asked to supply the deficiency thus created. He began under the nom-de-plume of "Uncle Remus" to put upon paper the stories he had heard in his youth on the plantation. These stories were later collected in the volume called *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* (1881). Three other



*From a photograph by Francis Benjamin Johnston*  
JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

volumes in the same vein, *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1883), *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892), and *Told by Uncle Remus* (1905), have been almost equally popular; and as a by-product of the interesting animal tales in these four volumes, the character of Uncle Remus himself has emerged as one of the permanent contributions to American, if not to world, fiction. The animal characters are also charmingly presented. What young American has not laughed at the pranks of Brer Rabbit, or rejoiced at the discomfiture of Brer Fox, or delighted in the antics of the other wonderful members of the animal company which Uncle Remus's vivid imagination has called up before him? The conversation of these talking beasts is so natural and in such perfect keeping with their characters that we are unable to detect a single false note or offer a single improvement upon the work as it lies before us. It is said that Brer Rabbit represents allegorically the weak and timid negro among his stronger white neighbors, represented by Brer Fox and the other animals, and since he is deficient in strength he has to resort to trickery and cunning to protect himself. In this view there is a delightful vein of mild satire discoverable in the negro folk tales.

*Harris's other stories.* Joel Chandler Harris wrote many excellent stories of other kinds, as in *Mingo and Other Sketches in Black and White* (1884), *Free Joe and Other Georgian Sketches* (1887), *Balaam and His Master and Other Sketches and Stories* (1891), which are largely tales of the negro in connection with his white master; *The Chronicles of Aunt Minervy Ann* (1899), a well-nigh successful attempt to create a negro female character as a counterpart to Uncle Remus; *At Teague Poteet's* (1883), a story of the Georgia mountaineers; *Tales of the Home Folks in Peace and in War* (1898), and *On the Wing of Occasions* (1900), stories of various types of middle Georgia life at home and on their travels; and finally *Wally Wanderoon and His*



*Story-Telling Machine* (1903), *Little Mr. Thimblefinger and His Queer Country* (1894), and its sequel, *Mr. Rabbit at Home* (1895), a series of the most delightful fairy stories yet written in America. He also essayed one longer novel, *Gabriel Tolliver, a Story of Reconstruction* (1902), but this is not so successful as are his short stories and tales.

**Louisiana story writers.** Louisiana is well represented by George Washington Cable (1844-), Grace King (1852-), and Ruth McEnery Stuart (1856-1917). Miss King has done some distinctive work in her artistic presentation of New Orleans life, her best stories being collected in the volume called *Balcony Stories* (1893). Mrs. Stuart produced good pathetic and humorous negro dialect stories, as in *A Golden Wedding and Other Tales* (1893); good Southern rural life stories as in her *In Simpkinsville* (1897); and a wonderfully charming story of Arkansas rural life in *Sonny* (1894), the life history of the only child of Deuteronomy Jones, a backwoods Arkansas farmer.

**George Washington Cable.** George Washington Cable (1844-) deserves fuller treatment. He discovered a unique field of local color or racial characteristics in the old Creole life in Louisiana, particularly in the old French quarter of early nineteenth century New Orleans. His volume of tales, *Old Creole Days* (1879), is a distinct contribution to the American local-color or regional short story. Two of his best long novels, *The Grandissimes* (1880) and *Bonaventure, a Prose Pastoral of Acadian Louisiana* (1888), prove Cable's ability to handle a larger theme in an artistic and satisfying way. He portrays the old Creole life with minute accuracy, loving sympathy, artistic insight and imagination. In some of his later novels he has turned to the Reconstruction and Civil War periods, as in *John March, Southerner* (1894) and *The Cavalier* (1901) respectively, but he is not so convincing here as in the field which he made peculiarly his own in his earlier fiction. In his last book, *The Flower of*

*the Chapdelaines* (1918), Cable comes again to the old Creole life of New Orleans, and the critics of the volume have been almost unanimous in their verdict that the novelist has lost none of his original charm in this return to the field of his first inspiration.

**Charles Egbert Craddock.** The Tennessee mountaineer and the wild seclusion and primitive surroundings of his mountain retreats is the peculiar realm which Charles Egbert Craddock, who in real life is Mary Noailles Murfree (1850<sup>422</sup>), has found for the exercise of her literary gifts. She spent much of her time in intimate study of the scenes and characters which she portrays, and hence her descriptions glow and glisten with all the beauty of the wild mountain scenery, and her presentation of the peculiar life, language, and social customs of the mountain people is convincing and realistic. W. M. Baskervill says of this author, "Her magic wand revealed the poetry as well as the pathos in the hard, narrow, and monotonous life of the mountaineers, and touched crag and stream and wood and mountain range with an enduring splendor."<sup>1</sup> She began her career in the early seventies by writing stories of the mountain folk for the magazines, and she published serially in *The Atlantic Monthly* almost all of her later stories. In 1884 she collected her first volume of short stories under the title, *In the Tennessee Mountains*, and since that time Miss Murfree has published more than a dozen novels and volumes of short stories, most of them dealing in one way or another with the life of the Tennessee mountaineers. Perhaps her best novels are *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885), *In the Clouds* (1887), *The Despot of Broomsedge Cove* (1889), and *The Juggler* (1897).

**Other Tennessee story writers.** Sarah Barnwell Elliott, who was born in Georgia and lived for a time in Texas, but whose home has been for a good many years in Sewanee,

<sup>1</sup>*Southern Writers*, Vol. I.

Tennessee, should be classed with Charles Egbert Craddock, inasmuch as she deals almost exclusively with the Tennessee mountaineers in her stories. She is the author of numerous novels dealing with moral and religious problems, not in the way of the ordinary purpose novel, but from the artistic point of view of the profound effect of these problems on human life. Her best productions are the novels *Jerry* (1891) and *The Durket Sperret* (1897), and a volume of short stories, *An Incident and Other Happenings* (1899), all dealing with the Tennessee mountaineer and other social and racial problems in the South. Will Allen Dromgoole, of Murfreesboro, the home of Charles Egbert Craddock, is another Tennessee woman who has written successful mountaineer and negro dialect stories and poems. Her best stories are contained in *The Heart of Old Hickory and Other Tennessee Stories* (1895).

**James Lane Allen.** James Lane Allen (1849-), of Kentucky, has found his most satisfactory field for literary exploitation in the Blue Grass region of his native state. His first volume of short stories, *Flute and Violin and Other Kentucky Tales and Romances* (1891), is, many critics think, the best product of his art. He paints with an artist's enthusiasm the beauties of the Kentucky scene and life. There is a certain poetic quality in his prose style, too, which is attractive and appropriate to his themes. *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894) and its sequel *Aftermath* (1895) are novellettes full of sincere love and enthusiasm for nature. The rich and beautiful descriptions of nature in her varying moods are woven in with a delicate thread of romance so as to make these stories decidedly attractive. *The Choir Invisible* (1897), a longer novel, also found a wide and eager public. *The Reign of Law* (1900) and *The Mettle of the Pasture* (1903), two other larger novels, probably did not meet with quite so generous a reception, but they, too, were widely read. *The Reign of Law* is called in its sub-title "A Tale of the

Kentucky Hemp Fields," but the hemp is only the incidental background or nature setting for the effects of the theory of evolution on the mind and faith of a young theological student. There is a frequent use of symbolism in Allen's stories, and in this he may be compared with Hawthorne. Sometimes this use of romantic symbolism seems extraneous to the theme of the story and has a tendency to retard rather than to propel or illuminate the action. Particularly is this true of the more recent works of this writer. Allen has never published hastily. He works long and patiently to gain his best effects. Breaking a silence of nearly six years after *The Mettle of the Pasture* appeared, he published a short novel in 1909, *The Bride of the Mistletoe*, and followed it the next year with *The Doctor's Christmas Eve*. In 1912 *A Heroine in Bronze* was published, and in 1915 *The Sword of Youth*. These last stories are written in a somewhat strained and over-refined style, and they have not aroused the same enthusiasm that greeted his earlier works, a good many readers now feeling all the more certain that Mr. Allen's first volumes were his best.

**John Fox, Jr.** Another Kentucky writer is John Fox, Jr., (1863-). He has found his subject mostly in the Cumberland mountains of his state and in the peculiar ideas of justice and social equity among the mountaineers. His earliest success in this field was *A Cumberland Vendetta and Other Stories* (1896). His most widely read novels are *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* (1903), *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1908), and *The Heart of the Hills* (1913). Two additional volumes of short stories and descriptive sketches, *Hell-fer-Sartain* (1897) and *Blue Grass and Rhododendron* (1901), deserve to be mentioned for their faithful portrayal of Kentucky scene and life, and particularly for the terse realism and dramatic force of some of the stories.

**Two women writers of Kentucky.** George Madden Martin (1866-), of Louisville, has the distinction of pushing

the range of the fiction country down into the elementary grades of the public schools in her Emmy Lou stories. These stories appeared serially in *McClure's Magazine* and were published in book form under the title *Emmy Lou, Her Book and Her Heart* (1902). The realism of child life, the intense emotion of the child soul, and the bigness of the child's problems were never better presented. Alice Hegan (1870-), also of Louisville, before her marriage to the poet and dramatist Cale Young Rice, has produced, besides other stories, two remarkably clever and spontaneously humorous character studies in *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1901) and its sequel *Lovey Mary* (1903).

**O. Henry.** It is difficult to place O. Henry in any local treatment of our writers of fiction. He seems to belong to the West—particularly the Southwest—as much as to the South, and as much to New York City as to the West. He is claimed by North Carolina, the state of his birth; by Texas, the state of his early success; and by the city of New York, the place where he finally won national fame. William Sydney Porter (1862-1910), known to the general public almost entirely by his pen-name of O. Henry, was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, September 11, 1862. He grew up in the typical fashion of the moderately well-to-do people of the post-bellum period in the Carolinas. He attended the elementary private school conducted by his aunt, Miss Evelina Porter, to whose training he attributes his love for story-telling. He became a voracious reader, especially between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. At sixteen he left school and became a clerk in a Greensboro drugstore. In the year 1881 he went West in company with Dr. J. H. Hall, eagerly seizing the opportunity to get a touch of Western life on a sheep ranch in La Salle County, Texas. Here he remained about two years, lounging around, working with the sheep, and amusing his friends by his gift for sketching and by his ability to tell a

good story. It is said that in these leisurely days he read Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* so assiduously that he could spell and define practically every word in it.

*O. Henry in Austin, Texas.* About 1883 Will Porter, as he was familiarly called, moved to Austin and became an intimate member of the family of Mr. Joe Harrell, whose sons recall many humorous cartoons, remarkable exhibitions of spelling and defining words, and one or two local love stories which Porter wrote at this time. He held several clerical positions, one among them being a draftsman's place in the Texas State Land Office. Presently he fell in love with and was married to Miss Athol Estes. After four years in the Land Office he became paying and receiving teller in an Austin bank, a position which eventually led to entanglements that put him under a cloud for several years. His biographer, Professor C. Alphonso Smith, emphatically declares that Porter was guiltless of the charges made against him and was clearly the victim of circumstances. At any rate his experiences during this dark period gave him an insight into the life of the underworld which he made good use of in his later stories.

*O. Henry's journalistic experiences.* O. Henry was inevitably to become either a writer or an artist. The whole trend of his life seemed to lead inevitably to humorous caricature and short-story writing. While he was working for the bank he became editor-owner and chief contributor and illustrator of a breezy weekly paper called *The Rolling Stone*, bearing under its title the motto, "Out for the Moss." This paper "rolled" for nearly a year, as O. Henry expressed it, and then stopped because it had gathered no moss. Porter was forced, under a charge of embezzlement, to resign from the bank, and he removed to Houston, where he obtained a position as reporter on *The Houston Daily Post*. A little later, to avoid the embarrassment of an open trial in the United States District Court at Austin,



*From a photograph by Paul Thompson, N.Y.*  
O. HENRY

he went away to Central America. But when he learned that his wife was hopelessly ill with tuberculosis, he bravely returned to Austin and faced the charge of embezzlement.

*O. Henry's successful career as a short-story writer.* It was while he was under the indictment for embezzlement that he began to write under the pen name of O. Henry. During a prison life of four years he wrote a number of stories which were accepted and published by good magazines. When he was released, he went to Pittsburgh, where his daughter Margaret was living with her grandmother. Here he continued to write, and presently he was selling his stories regularly at one hundred dollars apiece to *Ainslee's Magazine*. It was in 1902 that he removed to New York to devote himself to authorship. In 1904 he undertook to furnish to *The New York World* a story a week for an entire year, and he renewed the contract in 1905. The success of his first volume, *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), a loosely connected series of stories based on his Central American experiences, had already made his name well known, and from this period on to his death on June 5, 1910, O. Henry was, so far as popularity goes, the foremost short-story writer of America. His stories were collected in twelve volumes between 1906 and 1911. *Rolling Stones*, a supplemental volume of fugitive material some of which is of biographic interest, was added in 1912 by his friend and literary executor, Harry P. Steger, to whom is due in large measure the growth of O. Henry's fame. The remaining titles of his books are *The Four Millions* (1906), being stories of New York life; *Heart of the West* (1907), being largely stories of life in Texas; *The Gentle Grafter* (1908), being mostly stories of the underworld; *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907), *The Voice of the City* (1908), *Strictly Business* (1908), *Roads of Destiny* (1909), *Options* (1909), *Whirligigs* (1910), and *Sixes and Sevens* (1911), being collections of stories of miscellaneous



types and localities, but dealing mainly with life in New York City.

*The best of O. Henry's stories.* It is difficult to select the best of O. Henry's stories, for he has written so many of them,—something over three hundred in all,—and has treated so many themes in such variety of localities, that almost every reader will have his own choice as to the best ten or a dozen stories. O. Henry had what may be called an experiencing nature. Whatsoever places he visited, whatsoever events he witnessed, whatsoever characters he met, he immediately absorbed into his own experiencing nature, and all became grist for his literary or short-story mill. He wrote stories of ranch and city life in Texas and the great Southwest; of life in the Old and the New South; of revolutions and political intrigues in Central America; of tramps and outlaws and grafters and criminals of the underworld as he found them represented in the United States prison at Columbus, Ohio; and finally, and chief of all, of the multifarious experiences of the more than four million of representatives of the great common masses in New York City. In particular he was the gallant defending knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, of the underpaid, unappreciated, and viciously pursued shop girls of the great city. To select the best stories covering all these phases of American life is, then, no easy task. Among the Western stories some prime favorites are "Hearts and Crosses," "The Caballero's Way," "The Reformation of Calliope," "Madam Bo-Peep of the Ranches," "A Double-Dyed Deceiver," and "A Retrieved Reformation." This last is better known as "Alias Jimmie Valentine," the title of a play based on the story. Among the New York stories the following are excellent: "The Gift of the Magi," "A Service of Love," "An Unfinished Story," "The Last Leaf," "The Green Door," and "The Duplicity of Hargraves." The scene of "A Municipal Report," one of the best of all

O. Henry's stories, is laid in Nashville, Tennessee, mainly to disprove Frank Norris's assertion that nothing romantic could happen in such a city as Nashville.

*O. Henry's humor.* If there is a single characteristic of O. Henry's that has endeared him to the American public more than any other, it is his ever-present and all-pervasive sense of humor. It is true that his inordinate use of slang has lost him many admirers, but it must be admitted that slang in the mouths of many of O. Henry's characters is perfectly natural and consistent, and that, moreover, the clever use of slang is to the great mass of readers distinctly humorous. But slang aside, the dominant trait of O. Henry's humor is the continued and yet varied recurrence of the unexpected. This is illustrated in the almost constant use of the surprise ending in his stories. The reader will inevitably smile as, figuratively speaking, he is tossed into the air by O. Henry's clever trick of the double surprise at the conclusion of almost every story. Many of O. Henry's stories seem to contravene nature and ordinary conventional life with surprising and delightful humor. "A Harlem Tragedy" and "The Ransom of Red Chief" are examples in point. In the first a woman dotes on her husband because he beats her and cuffs her about; in the second two desperadoes, instead of securing a large ransom for a wild and wiry young boy whom they have kidnaped, are forced themselves to pay the boy's father a considerable sum to take the young scamp off their hands. O. Henry is extremely fond of puns, humorous word-play, and malapropisms. Occasionally a whole story is based upon a pun, as in "The Ransom of Mack" and "Girl." In many stories O. Henry allows his ignorant characters to use big words in the wrong sense, mispronounce and misinterpret, misquote familiar passages from Shakespeare and the Bible, and make all sorts of ludicrous and absurd blunders, much to the delight of unsophisticated readers.

But O. Henry's humor is deeper than all these mere verbal quibbles, absurd contradictions, and playful superficialities. It is inherent in his conception of character and in his attitude toward the world. It is pervasive and fundamental, and like all finer humor it is incapable of final analysis.

*Final summary.* The chief qualities of O. Henry's stories are realism touched with the glamour of romance, piquancy and cleverness of style and plot, a raciness of language with a large intermixture of slang, a real sympathy and true comprehension of the varied types of our democratic life, especially of the middle and lower classes, and an unfailing sense for the humorous and pathetic in every conceivable situation. He broke most of the conventional canons for correct writing, and yet he was a remarkably good technician in his own type of story. He says that the first rule in writing stories is to "write to please yourself; there is no second rule." The most striking individual characteristic of his stories as a whole is the surprise ending. Guess, prepare for it, watch for it as you may, you will inevitably be brought up with a laugh and a surprised feeling on the last page or even at the very last lines of nearly every one of his stories. Hyder E. Rollins in writing of this characteristic of O. Henry's makes a happy comparison: "Children play 'crack-the-whip' not for the fun of the long preliminary run, but for the excitement of the final sharp twist that throws them off their feet. So adults read O. Henry, impatiently glancing at the swiftly moving details in pleased expectancy of a surprise ending." But O. Henry's stories have more in them than the mere cleverness of their surprise endings. They are drawn from real life, and there is in them a convincing actuality and truth, an interpretative power, a charm, a breadth of sympathy which lifts them into the realm of art. There is no longer any question of the security of this writer's place among the short-story writers of America. If Poe said the first word on the modern short story,

certainly O. Henry has said the latest. Professor C. Alphonso Smith in his admirable *O. Henry Biography* (1916) succinctly summarizes the progress of the American short story in saying that Irving legendized the short story, Poe standardized it, Hawthorne allegorized it, Bret Harte first successfully localized it, and O. Henry humanized it.

#### 4. THE CENTRAL AND FAR WESTERN GROUP PRELIMINARY SURVEY

**Meaning of the term West.** West is a relative term. At one time in our history it meant the section of the interior just beyond the Atlantic coast settlements; next it meant the section beyond the Appalachian range, including the Ohio and Tennessee valleys; at another time it meant the great Mississippi Valley, and then it was extended to cover all the northwest territory drained by the Missouri River and its tributaries; and finally the term came to mean the Rocky Mountains and all the territory beyond, known as the Pacific slope. We still speak of the central portion of our country as the great plains of the Middle West, of the territory north and west of Missouri as the Northwest, of the territory south and west of Missouri as the Southwest, and of the Rocky Mountain or Pacific slope territory as the Far West. In studying the latest division of our literature we may designate it as the Central and Far Western Group. We might easily divide it into two or more groups, but since the literary history of the entire West in reality covers but little more than half a century, and since the dominant tone of all this later literature is practically identical throughout the nation, we may at present conveniently consider in one group the writers from the Central and the Far West.

**Period covered: 1865-1919.** We shall find that the production of literature of permanent value in this latest

period of our national literature really dates from about 1865, or the period from the close of the Civil War to the present. The West had been already for more than half a century rapidly filling up, but the pioneers were engaged in subduing the new territory almost exactly as the colonists had done along the Atlantic coast at an earlier period, and like the colonists, they had little or no time for the development of the arts. Bold pioneers like Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, and Zebulon Pike had already pierced far into the western wilderness, and settlers gradually followed to fill up the sections explored. Population advanced along the line of least resistance and most promise, that is, along the valleys of the great drainage systems, such as the Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers. At last the railroads came to supplant the old methods of overland travel — the prairie schooner, the stage coach, and the pony express. With the improved methods of transportation and impelled by various impulses, such as crop failures at home, the discovery of gold and silver from time to time in the new country, and land hunger, emigrants moved to the West, so that by the middle of the century many of the Western states had already been admitted to the Union and most of the remaining domain was organized into territories awaiting admission as soon as the requisite number of inhabitants was attained.

**Westward territorial expansion.** It is unnecessary to go further into the acquisition of the vast western territory than to remind the American history student that Jefferson completed the important Louisiana purchase in 1803, the same year in which Ohio was admitted as a state. The wonderful expedition of exploration made by Lewis and Clark in 1804-06 had revealed the character and extent of the great Northwest as far as Oregon and the Pacific coast. The territory around the Great Lakes had been organized by 1809, and in 1818 Illinois was admitted as a

state. In 1820 the vast territory north and west of the southern boundary line of Missouri was organized, under the Missouri Compromise, as territory for the making of future free states, and Missouri was admitted as a state in 1821.



*From the painting by Denman Fink*

SETTLERS MOVING WEST ALONG THE CUMBERLAND ROAD

Wagon roads were opened throughout the West. In 1825 the Erie Canal was completed, thus uniting by water the extreme western lakes with Albany, New York, and opening water communication thence south on the Hudson River to the Atlantic Ocean. In 1841 a railroad was completed as far west as Albany, and ten years later Chicago could be

reached by rail. It was not until 1869 that the first great transcontinental railroad, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific seaboard, was finally put into operation, but in the meantime the overland stage routes had been greatly enlarged and improved, so that the rush of population westward could be at least partially accommodated. Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and applied for admission into the Union in 1845. Then followed the Mexican War, and by the peace of 1848 the United States acquired not only the Rio Grande border territory which was in dispute, but also the fine, rich territory on the Pacific slope and that northwest of Texas, including California, Utah, and New Mexico. In this same year gold was discovered in California, and in 1849 the Pacific slope territory was deluged with prospectors, later proudly designated as "forty-niners." In 1850 California was admitted as a state. The vast Oregon country, reaching as far north as Alaska, had been for a long time claimed by both England and the United States, but by a compromise agreement in 1846 it was divided on the 49th parallel of latitude, the present boundary line between Canada and the United States. In this year, too, Iowa was admitted as a state; in 1848 Wisconsin; in 1858 Minnesota; in 1859 Oregon. In 1854 began the great struggle between the slavery and antislavery forces in the Kansas-Nebraska territory, and these states were eventually brought in as free states in 1861 and 1867 respectively. Thus gradually the whole belt of the North American continent now occupied by the United States was organized into territories, and by the end of the Civil War by far the greater number of these territories had been admitted into the Union.

**Character of the Western literature.** This condensed survey of the rapid development of the West will give us a basis for judging the literature that was to come from this section. The first writings were naturally descriptive of

the new territory, its life, its possibilities, its resources. The crude records of pioneers like Daniel Boone and George Rogers Clark, and those of more scientific explorers like Lewis and Clark, and the private records, diaries and correspondence of other pioneer settlers make up the first contribution. The writers were largely American emigrants from the Atlantic seaboard. Even down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century we shall find that many of the Western writers were born and educated in New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the older Southern states, and were Western only in the sense that they had moved west with the tide of population and were recording Western scene and life as they saw it. But in more recent years the native sons of the West have come forward to express the real spirit of their section and at the same time of the nation at large; certainly the most characteristic literary products of the West since 1870 have come from writers born and educated there.

**Americanism, or the democratic spirit.** The expression of pure Americanism, of the democratic spirit in its broadest significance, is the characteristic note of our Western literature. Perhaps this native American spirit has developed more distinctly and rapidly in the West because this section was freest from the embittering effects of the Civil War. Its territory saw little of the actual military campaigns, and its people were easily and quickly absorbed in their problems of developing the raw resources of the new country; so that they had little time to spend upon vain regrets, clearing up old scores, and preparing plans for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the territory devastated by war. The Civil War itself was a great educative force, and the tide of emigration westward was only one of the effects of the diffusion of a resulting general knowledge of the resources and character of our country as a whole. New towns began to spring up as if by magic. With the invention



and introduction of improved machinery, vast stretches of rich agricultural lands were brought under cultivation, and in the Middle West wheat and corn were eventually grown in such quantities as to make this section one of the great granaries of the world. The Great Lakes and the Mississippi River and its tributaries formed the chief arteries for commerce, and the steamboat became the common carrier for the produce of all the Central West. New writers like Mark Twain and Bret Harte came to chant the vigorous life of river and mining camp; great descriptive writers like John Muir to describe its wonderful beauty of scenery; clear-voiced poets like Joaquin Miller and Edward Rowland Sill to sing the songs of the Sierras; and novelists like Frank Norris to write the epic of wheat with all the complicated financial and industrial machinery involved in its production and distribution throughout the world. The wild herds of buffaloes had disappeared before the oncoming tide of civilization, and immense herds of cattle and sheep and horses came to take their place. In this rich, wild, broad, free country it was but natural that the new democratic note should predominate. Most of the writers were what we may term self-educated men, that is, they rarely had the advantage of a classical or college training. They gained their knowledge from actual contact with life rather than from books and academic lectures, and they were freed, consequently, from the restraints and limitations which a fuller knowledge of the older literature and standard literary models would have imposed upon them. The New York and New England writers had followed largely in the beaten literary tracks, and had submitted, perhaps unconsciously, to European rather than American ideals and standards of literary excellence. The authors of the new West hewed out fresh paths of literary travel and followed no standards except such as their own sense of fitness fixed for them.

**Lincoln, a typical product of the West.** Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) is a typical product of the Middle West. He was born in a log cabin in Kentucky, moved with his parents into Indiana when he was seven years old, and on into Illinois just as he reached his twenty-first year. He worked hard on the farm, later becoming known as the "rail-splitter," studied the Bible and Shakespeare closely, and thus prepared himself for his future career as a statesman. He had absorbed the very essence of the new Americanism as typified in the Western freedom and democratic spirit, and in 1860, in spite of all obstacles, he was elected president of the United States. Every child knows of the terrible conflict which followed his inauguration in 1861, and every American now honors Abraham Lincoln along with George Washington as one of the great presidents of our country. The tragic death of Lincoln at the hands of an assassin in Washington, April 15, 1865, plunged the whole country, North and South, into grief. No more unfortunate thing could have happened—especially to the South, facing as it did the trying period of reconstruction which was to follow—than to lose at this critical juncture the influence of the great-brained, justice-loving, tender-hearted Lincoln. We do not ordinarily think of Abraham Lincoln as a literary man, but as a wise statesman and leader, a clear thinker, and a forceful debater. But in the critical and distressing period through which Lincoln was called to lead our nation, the events all seemed to converge to a focus in the dramatic moment when he delivered the one supremely great literary utterance of his life, the celebrated "Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery." The simplicity and directness of style, the compact and logical structure the sincerity and power of the emotional appeal of this brief address have rarely been equaled and have never been surpassed in American oratory.

**The spirit of optimism and humor.** Besides this democratic or national note, one other general characteristic may be affirmed of Western literature as a whole: it is peculiarly suffused with a spirit of optimism and a sense of the humorous. Melancholy, gloom, pessimism, the modern note of morbidness and despair, have found little or no place in the literature of the West. Romance is prominent, optimism everywhere apparent, and humor widely diffused. "The Laughter of the West" is the title of a chapter in Professor Pattee's *History of American Literature Since 1870*. Analyzing the chief contributions of the West to American literature, Professor George Edward Woodberry says: "The earliest stir of original literary impulse in the West was by way of humor. Laughter was bred into the people; it solved many situations, it lessened the friction of close personal contact, it made for peace, being the alternative for ill-nature or a blow. The constancy of it shows its spontaneity. In the camps of the miner, on the river steamboats, in the taverns of the court circuit, there sprang up inexhaustible anecdotes, rallies of wit, yarns, and fanciful lies and jokes on the dullard or the stranger. Out of this atmosphere came Lincoln, our greatest practical humorist, with that marvelous power of turning all he touched into wisdom; and on the free, imaginative side, Mark Twain, our capital example, was blood and bone of the Western humor."<sup>1</sup>

**Publishing centers.** In so vast a territory and so young a business and social organization it was not to be expected that definite schools or coteries of writers or any important literary centers should be developed. It is perhaps due largely to the isolation and widely scattered distribution of the Western writers that they have been forced to rely more fully on their own independence of thought and originality of expression. The publishing centers remained largely in the East, it is true, but the demand for fresh

<sup>1</sup>*America in Literature*, p. 158.

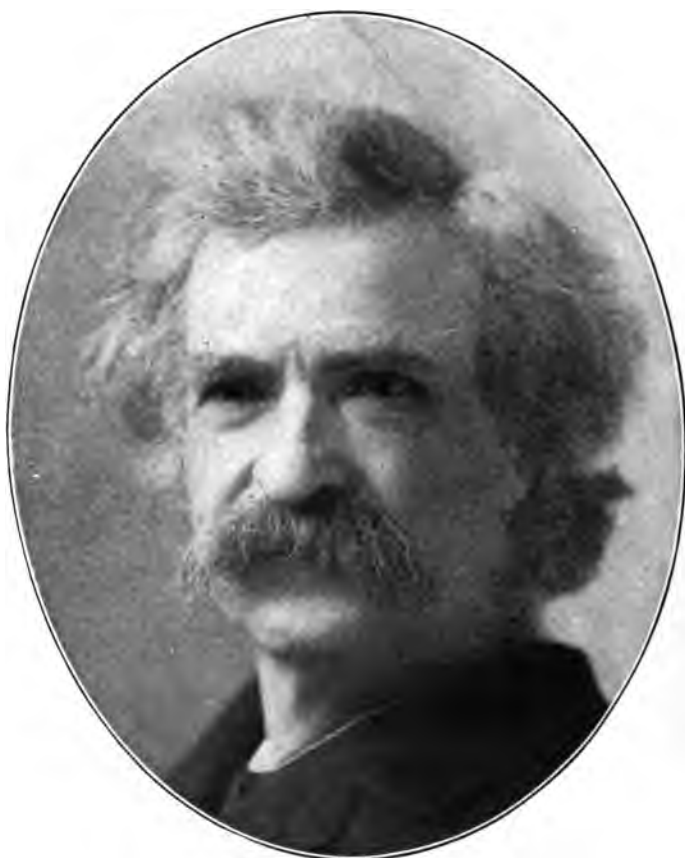
local literature from all parts of the country, South and West alike, was not to be resisted by the Northern and Eastern publishers, even if they had desired to resist it, a thing which in reality the publishers never did. The Western newspapers developed rapidly, and some publishing centers like Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco sprang up to supply the growing demand for the publication of both books and magazines. *The Overland Monthly* was established in 1868 in San Francisco with Bret Harte as its editor, and in 1880 *The Dial*, a critical literary journal, made its appearance at Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Finally at Chicago in 1912, *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, was founded by Harriet Monroe, as a mouthpiece of the "New Poetry" of the last two decades.

#### THE MAJOR WESTERN WRITERS

**Classification of the writers.** The full spirit of the West is well represented in its literature. Besides Lincoln, who has already been mentioned as the typical figure of the new democratic spirit, the major prose writers are Mark Twain and Bret Harte, and the major poets are Joaquin Miller, Eugene Field, James Whitcomb Riley, and William Vaughn Moody. From the national point of view there may be some objection to the classification of all of these as major writers. There may be in them some lack of literary conformity and adherence to traditions, but they have voiced a new American ideal; and whether all of them may be classed in the rank of major writers or not, is purely an academic question. All of them certainly deserve large attention in any well balanced survey of our literature.

**Samuel Langhorne Clemens—Mark Twain.** Mark Twain is not merely our greatest humorist; he is also one of our greatest creative geniuses, and he is undoubtedly our one writer who is most thoroughly representative of the genuine

<sup>1</sup>In 1918 *The Dial* was transferred to New York City.



SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS  
(Mark Twain)

American spirit and life. For a long time he was looked upon as a mere jester, and his works were not accepted as belonging at all to the best class of literature; but from the first he was accepted at his real worth by a few discerning ones, and during the past two decades the critics and the public alike have come to realize that Mark Twain is one of the few creative giants that have sprung out of our democratic soil. He shares with Walt Whitman the distinction of coming up directly from the common democratic masses, and with him, too, he shares the almost unanimous approval and applause of European critics.

*Early life as a printer and river pilot.* Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), the son of John Clemens and Jane Lampton, both of unpretentious but sterling Southern families, was born November 30, 1835, in the hamlet of Florida, Missouri, some fifty miles west of the Mississippi River. Four years later the family moved to Hannibal, a typical river town about a hundred miles north of St. Louis; and here grew up in all the freedom of that border life the boy who was to make the town famous by enshrining its life in those immortal books, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. It was almost impossible to keep Sam in the village school or to make him study his lessons, but the effort was kept up until he reached his twelfth year. He was then apprenticed to learn the printer's trade, a fortunate choice, since it brought him into contact with type and printer's ink and thus helped to complete the scanty education he had received in the village school. He worked for six years as a "printer's devil" on the local newspapers, and as one of his companions remarked, he was rightly named in this position. Then he took a sort of journeyman's trip to the East to complete his training as a printer. He remained for a year or more in Philadelphia and New York, but he was not satisfied to become a mere typesetting machine, and so he turned his face westward once more to seek fame

and fortune in the land of his birth. For about two years he was Horace Bixby's cub, or assistant on a steamboat, learning the business of a pilot on the Mississippi River, and for about two years more he was himself a master pilot on that treacherous river. He was proud of his profession, and later in life he declared that he loved it far better than any other business he had tried. The Civil War brought to a close this period of his career, but we have a faithful portrayal of the vanished past of Mississippi pilotage in his reminiscent treatment in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883).

*Experiences in the Far West.* His next experience carried him to the Far West. He joined a troop preparatory to enlisting in the Confederate Army, but a few weeks of camp life convinced him that soldiering was not an occupation that suited him. He was led by his Southern ancestry and his environment (for he was reared in a slave-holding community) to espouse the Southern cause, but deep down in his heart there was little enthusiasm for it. His eldest brother had just been appointed territorial secretary of Nevada, and young Clemens was offered the opportunity of going with him as his assistant. So during the years from 1861 to 1867 he was again enlarging his education by looking on and taking part in those wild and stirring activities of the newly opened West. He soon felt the call of the gold and struck out for fortune in the mining districts. He did not succeed in finding much gold, though he came perilously near to it on several occasions, but he did succeed in storing his mind with all those wonderful experiences out of which he was to mint the golden romance of some of his later books, such as *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches* (1867) and *Roughing It* (1872).

*Newspaper reporter: origin of pen-name "Mark Twain."* Discouraged in his fruitless mining operations, young Clemens turned to his old occupation and became local

reporter on *The Enterprise*, a rather distinctive paper published at Virginia City, a thriving mining town that had sprung up like magic around the great silver mines known as the Comstock lode. Many were the practical jokes and startling schemes indulged in by the lively group of newspaper men engaged on this paper, and it was the rampant imagination of the young reporter that usually led in these escapades. Soon he was sent to Carson City to report the doings of the newly formed legislature, and as was expected of him, he sent back a series of exceedingly breezy letters. These were unsigned at first, but they were being widely copied, and he felt that he ought to choose a pen-name so as to conserve and center his reputation around it. He hit upon the happy combination of Mark Twain, an old river term meaning the mark registering two (twain) fathoms, or twelve feet, of water. He said it had a comforting sound, for whenever a pilot heard that reading called out, he knew he was in a safe depth of water. His reputation was spreading rapidly now, and so the call to the wider world led him to San Francisco. It must be confessed, however, that the immediate cause of his leaving Carson City was to avoid prosecution upon the charge of accepting a challenge to a duel, even though the duel was the celebrated one which never came off. At San Francisco he met Bret Harte and other men of local fame as journalists, poets, lecturers, and artists of one sort or another, and under the influence of this new environment his style developed rapidly from what he called an awkward and grotesque sort of natural utterance, into a more facile literary type of prose.

*Mark Twain's luck as a pocket miner.* His vigorous news letters which he still sent back to his old employers on *The Virginia City Enterprise* soon got him into trouble with the police of San Francisco,—for he did not hesitate to attack some of their corrupt practices,—and he was forced to leave the city for a while. With his pal, Jim Gillis, who was the

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original of Bret Harte's "Truthful James," he went to the mountains of east California and engaged in the fascinating game of pocket mining. The partners were just on the verge of uncovering a rich treasure of nuggets when they deserted their claim and allowed some more fortunate miners to come along and discover the pocket just a few feet from where they stopped. But the real chance of Mark Twain's life came from this experience, for here he ran across the droll story of "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." It was early in 1865 that he first heard the story, and by the end of this year, upon the publication of the story in the East, Mark Twain was well on his way to fame.

"*The Innocents Abroad.*" After the publication of this early volume of sketches in 1867, he continued his newspaper work in San Francisco, making one very successful trip to the Hawaiian Islands. He also won some fame as a lecturer at this time. But the first really great success came when he got a commission to travel through Europe and the the Holy Land with a group of Americans who were to make voyage in the "Quaker City." By skilful persuasions he convinced the owners of *The Alta Californian* that he could send them a series of letters that would be worth the price of the trip, something over \$1,200. He wrote fifty-odd letters of his experiences on this trip, and these were later collected in a book which took the public by storm — namely, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). Other books of travel and of impressions gained abroad had been written by Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Bayard Taylor, but this was an entirely new type. It was extravagantly humorous, boisterously funny, and yet filled with wonderful passages of description and comment on the really impressive scenes of the Old World. The book was at bottom a severe satire on the sentimental and gushy type of description that was found in the guide books and travel letters of the day. Mark Twain went abroad with his eyes open, and he laughed

to scorn those American innocents who were ever ready to gulp down with rolling eyes and ecstatic exclamations every fossilized legend that the sentimental guide books or the stereotyped talk of their paid guides gave them. The breezy, original, humorous, human, and frankly American revelations of this new writer who saw things with his own eyes and reported them as he saw them met with immediate and widespread approval.

*His marriage: journalistic work.* It was on this tour that Mark Twain met Charlie Langdon and saw for the first time the beautiful miniature of Langdon's sister Olivia, the woman who was to become his wife and the most profoundly formative influence on his character and on his later attitude toward his art. She was a wealthy girl, and it seemed almost unthinkable that an unknown Westerner without money, formal culture, or social position should aspire to her hand. But by persistence and patience Mark Twain overcame all obstacles, and he was in every sense of the word happily mated with this charming woman. She called him always by the suggestive pet name of "Youth," and all through her life, by his own confession, she was his most helpful and sympathetic critic, aiding him to realize himself to the fullest extent in the more serious and lasting products of his art. Upon their marriage in 1870, they went to Buffalo, where through the help of Mr. Langdon Mark Twain had become part owner and associate editor of *The Buffalo Express*. But the venture was not a fortunate one; sorrows due to death and sickness followed, and presently the young couple sold their property in Buffalo and retired to Elmira, New York, for the summer, and then moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where they made their home for a number of years.

*Mark Twain as a lecturer.* After giving up his journalistic position, Clemens arranged to go on the lecture platform to recoup his fortunes. He had succeeded from the

very first as a lecturer in California, and had captivated audiences in the East and in the Middle West just after his return from his first trip abroad; so he undertook his second tour with full confidence. He won his audiences by his slow, drawling speech and by his narrative and dramatic powers, as well as by his inimitable dry humor and flashes of pure wit. He was acclaimed the most popular lecturer and reader in America, but he never liked this work and resorted to the platform only when it was necessary to recover from some financial difficulty.

"*Roughing It*." In 1872 *Roughing It* appeared and was welcomed quite as eagerly as *The Innocents Abroad* had been. This new book was based on his experiences in the West, and to many readers it is more entertaining than *The Innocents Abroad*, mainly because it is more thoroughly American in subject-matter and treatment. To protect his rights of publication in this new volume, Mark Twain made a trip to England. He had some notion also of gathering material for a new book on the English people; but when he was treated so cordially and honored so signally by them, he gave up the idea, confessing that he could not bring himself to dishonor their hospitality by exploiting them in a humorous book.

"*The Gilded Age*." On his return to America he collaborated with Charles Dudley Warner in the production of a novel called *The Gilded Age* (1873), in which Warner did the romance, and Mark Twain drew the characters, modeling them mostly from the members of his own family. The character of Colonel Mulberry Sellers, the dreamer and idealist, drawn from James Lampton, his maternal uncle, is one of the most magnetic and original of all Mark Twain's creations. Colonel Sellers was later made the central figure in a successful play.

"*Tom Sawyer*" and "*Huckleberry Finn*." After another trip to London in which he registered a signal triumph as

a lecturer, Mark Twain began the composition of a new book which was to surpass in popularity anything he had yet done. This was the wonderful story of boy life on the



MARK TWAIN AT HIS OLD HOME IN HANNIBAL, MISSOURI

Mississippi, based on his own experiences and those of several of his companions in the old days at Hannibal, Missouri. Other work interrupted him before he completed the task, however, and it was not until 1876 that *Tom Sawyer* made its appearance. This book and *The*

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), with which it is usually bracketed, are, according to the consensus of opinion, the finest creative achievement of Mark Twain's genius. Tom is the typical American boy—bad and yet not too bad to be likable, rough and ready, shrewd, courageous, sincere, genuine. His story is so realistically told that many persons believe that the hero actually lived through the adventures described. Huckleberry Finn is a poor outcast from the very lowest stratum of society, but he had a tender heart and a pure soul wrapped in his unkempt and hardened little body. The book is one of the finest pieces of realism in modern literature. It gives us a faithful presentation of the mid-century life on the Mississippi, the scenes coming on in rapid succession like a vivid panorama moving before our very eyes. There is nothing unnatural or accidental, nothing romantic, but all appears to be just as it is in real life. This book, together with *Tom Sawyer* and *Life on the Mississippi*, gives us our truest historical picture of the vanished life on the great inland waterway. *Huckleberry Finn* has been singled out not only as Mark Twain's masterpiece, but as one of the world's great books.

*Mark Twain's other important works.* Among his many other volumes, two or three at least must be mentioned. The romantic extravaganza, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), is a humorous presentation of the new democratic ideals as opposed to the ancient aristocracies and monarchical forms of government. *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), a delightful juvenile romance, had previously set forth something of the same teaching in the plot whereby a prince and a pauper are made to change places in order that each may see how the other half of the world lives. These two books—together with *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), a searching study of negro slavery punctuated with keen and exhilarating epigrams as chapter headings, purporting to be maxims by the title character;

and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), an historical study cast in memoir form, a powerful piece of writing and the one of all his works that Mark Twain liked best—make up the more valuable of his later productions. In most of his other works, particularly in the field of literary criticism, he displays more courage than good judgment.

*The story of his debts.* The story of Mark Twain's debts is to be placed with Sir Walter Scott's very similar struggle as one of the two most inspiring examples of business integrity recorded in modern literary history. Being himself somewhat of a dreamer, he allowed many impractical enthusiasts to enlist his aid in their financial speculations, and he lost heavily in most of these investments. At last he became involved in large losses through a publishing house with which he was connected as a partner. When an assignment was forced upon the firm, Mark Twain gave up all his own property, and his wife also generously put in her patrimony to satisfy the creditors; but there was still a large sum found to be owing. Through the bankruptcy laws he might have settled legally by simply giving up all the assets of the company, but he asked for time, saying that he would pay dollar for dollar if he lived to earn it. In his sixtieth year he set himself resolutely to the task of molding his talents into cash through his writings and his lectures. In 1895 he began the memorable lecture tour around the world, beginning in America and moving westward to Australia, New Zealand, India, Ceylon, and South Africa, finally resting in Vienna, Austria. This marvelous lecture tour, perhaps the most notable on record, netted him a large sum. With this and the additional income from his books, in two and a half years he had paid every dollar of the debts of his firm and was again a free man with untarnished business honor.

*Honors heaped upon Mark Twain.* From a humble beginning Mark Twain had reached a dizzy height in the

affectionate regard of his own people and of the world. He was not spoiled by his success, however, and he refused to compromise himself by exploiting his popularity or appearing before the public for personal gain. He gave his services freely for the public good, but he had a competency now, and there was no longer need for him to pile up money. He was greater than kings and potentates, for he commanded the affectionate regard of millions of men through the magnetism, sincerity, and uniqueness of his own personality. Missouri, through its state university, honored her famous son with the degree of LL.D., and some years later even the conservative Oxford University in England conferred upon him her coveted degree of Litt. D.

He made other voyages abroad in search of recreation and health, for his constitution was gradually weakening. His wife died in 1903 in Florence, Italy, and the blow was a severe one to Mark Twain. He took up his residence in New York City with his one surviving daughter, and fought bravely but ineffectually against a growing sense of loneliness, bitterness, and pessimism. On his seventieth birthday a great dinner was given in his honor in New York, and on this occasion he delivered perhaps the greatest of all his speeches. In his last years he retired to Stormfield, a beautiful home that had been built for him at Redding, Connecticut, and here he died, April 21, 1910, in his seventy-fifth year. He was buried beside his wife and three of his children in Elmira, New York.<sup>1</sup>

**Bret Harte.** Francis Bret Harte (1839-1902) was by birth and training an Easterner, being born in Albany, New York, August 25, 1839; but he earned his reputation by writing poems and stories dealing with the wild scenery,

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<sup>1</sup>*Mark Twain, a Biography* (1912) by Albert Bigelow Paine is the authoritative life of this author. Mr. Paine's *The Boy's Life of Mark Twain* (1916) is a briefer and simpler story based on the larger work.

conglomerate life, and odd characters of the mining districts of California, and so he is always thought of as belonging to the western group of writers. Harte received only a common-school education, the principal source of his literary training being his parents. His father, a professor of Greek in Albany College, was a linguist of considerable attainments, and his mother a cultured woman who directed her son's reading with such judicious care that by the time he was grown he was exceedingly well read. In 1854 he went to California and there tried to earn a living through several small clerical and teaching positions. He finally entered a newspaper printing office as a compositor, and by dint of steady purpose and persistent effort at writing he rose to successful editorial positions, first on *The Golden Era* and then on *The Californian*, a weekly paper to which he contributed his "Condensed Novels," these being parodies on popular works of English and American fiction.

*Bret Harte's stories of Western mining life.* In 1868 *The Overland Monthly* was founded with Bret Harte as its editor. The first number appeared without any matter of a distinctly local character; so for the second number the young editor supplied the deficiency himself by writing his first story of mining life, "The Luck of Roaring Camp." The proprietor of the magazine became dubious as to the wisdom of printing such a frank and novel presentation of a situation so unusual, characters so rough and uncouth, and life in such a questionable stratum of society. But when the editor-author of the story threatened to resign unless allowed to exercise his own judgment unhampered in selecting matter for the magazine, the proprietor yielded and the story appeared in its original form. It provoked a good deal of protest at home, being characterized as indecent, immodest, improper, and unfaithful in its portrayal of the better phases of Western life; but it was warmly welcomed in the East as the work of an original writer of great promise. The





FRANCIS BRET HARTE

editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* begged for a similar contribution, and a number of letters of commendation came to the author of this new type of story. "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Miggles," and "Tennessee's Partner" followed, and presently Bret Harte had enough stories in this vein to make up a volume. These stories, together with a catchy, humorous kind of dialect verse, of which "The Heathen Chinee" or "Plain Language from Truthful James," and "Jim" are typical, made Harte famous not only in America but in England as well.

*Harte's connection with "The Atlantic Monthly."* In 1870, being flattered by the applause of the East, Harte went to New York to engage in writing for the magazines. *The Atlantic Monthly* paid him the munificent sum of \$10,000 for all his work for a year, and he was probably at that time the best paid short-story writer in the country. But in spite of his large earnings he became involved in debt. To escape from his difficulties he accepted an appointment in the consular service and went to Germany and then to Glasgow, Scotland. Finally he settled in England, where he was even more popular than he was in America. He became estranged from his family and remained in England until his death in 1902.

*Harte's place and influence in our literature.* Harte wrote many stories and poems imitative of his first successful work, but the promise of his early output was not realized in his later productions. He did not seem to love the country he had so successfully exploited in his stories. He was not a great interpreter of the real American spirit, as was his early contemporary and colleague, Mark Twain, but he caught the spirit of the California mining camp in the gold-fever days as nobody else was able to do, and he has preserved for future generations this small but interesting and now completely vanished phase of American life. He was confessedly a lover and follower of Dickens, and like

him did not hesitate to portray all sorts of low characters, rough miners, gamblers, adventurers, desperadoes, and unchaste women, and in each of these he discovered that element of the human, that touch of nature which after all makes the whole world kin. His range was narrow, but he did good work in the local short story, in which type of writing his influence has been by no means insignificant.<sup>1</sup>

**Joaquin Miller.** Cincinnatus Heine Miller (1842-1913), better known by his pen-name Joaquin Miller, was born on November 10, 1842, somewhere on the border line between Ohio and Indiana. He tells us in the autobiographical sketch prefixed to his complete works that his cradle was a covered wagon, one of those "prairie schooners" in which his pioneer parents were making their long journey westward. They settled for a while in Indiana but finally decided to push on to Oregon, a distance of over three thousand miles, where they made their permanent home. Joaquin had his full share of the hardships and adventurous experiences that naturally fell to this pioneer family. Once he was painfully wounded in a fight with some unfriendly Indians; an arrow pierced his face and neck and almost caused his death. But during these years he learned to love the wild Western life and the picturesque and beautiful things of this wonder world of nature with a passion which made him widely known as the poet laureate of the Far West, or as he was still more frequently called, "The Poet of the Sierras."

*His wanderings.* As a young adventurer Miller went from Oregon to California and took passage for Boston, but he stopped off at Nicaragua on his voyage down the Pacific and joined General Walker in his romantic revolutionary expedition into that country. His Central American experiences later found expression in the long poem "Walker in

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<sup>1</sup> The fullest life of Bret Harte is that by H. C. Merwin. The shorter study by H. W. Boynton is more judicious if less eulogistic.

Nicaragua." Then he drifted back to the coast of Oregon, spent a short time at college, and became a teacher. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and was for a short time a district judge. He had been writing a great deal of prose and verse during these later years, but his productions met with little favor. The lure of the mountains was ever drawing him away from his social and legal duties, and when gold was discovered in Idaho and Montana, he left all and joined the stream of miners which flowed into those states. He accumulated enough of the precious dust to build a home for his parents and purchase a newspaper for himself. At the opening of the Civil War he threw his influence toward the peace party, and as a result of his vigorous editorials his paper was suppressed. Again he retired to the mountains to live alone with nature and to write poetry.

*Miller's visit to England.* About 1870 he crossed the continent and took passage from New York to England. He felt that he could never find an audience in his own country, for he had already published several thin volumes which had attracted little or no attention either in the West, where they were printed, or in the East, where he hoped to find recognition. In London he lived a secluded life until he published at his own expense a volume of poems. This work included an earlier poem on Joaquin Murietta, a Mexican bandit, from which fact he was himself jocularly called "Joaquin,"—a name which he permanently assumed as his pen-name in his next volume. The seven poems in his first volume caught the English ear by their novelty and vigor and unmistakable evidences of poetical genius. The metrical crudeness and lack of literary finish were everywhere recognized; but the English press praised his work extravagantly, and he was enabled to bring out his first really important volume, *Songs of the Sierras*, in 1871. His own picturesque personality in his pioneer garb,



JOAQUIN MILLER AT HIS CALIFORNIA HOME

the rich new experiences heralded from an unknown world, and the varied and beautiful scenery of the great Rocky Mountains which formed the staple of his poetry, made him for a time a sort of literary lion in London. He was invited to dine with many notable persons, met such men as Dickens, Browning, Archbishop Trench, Moore, Rosetti, and was cordially received in clubs and private families.

*His cabin near Washington City and his lodge in California.* In spite of his success in London, little attention was paid to him in America, for in his uncouth Western garb he was looked upon as an unfair representative of American culture and art. He had to wait long and patiently for an appreciative hearing in his own country. For a time he lived near Washington City, building for himself a log cabin on Stony Creek, a few miles north of the city. This cabin is still an object of interest to the thousands of people who drive in the beautiful park which has since been laid out there. He finally purchased a mountain-side of his own in Oakland, California, in sight of San Francisco, and built for himself the lodge in which he lived until his death in 1913.

*General estimate of Miller's work.* Joaquin Miller caught the spirit of the Western mountain scenery as none who had not lived with it could do. He is no imitator of the European bards, but an original American poet who was willing to put down in his own way what his own eyes saw and his own heart felt. He had his limitations and his faults, but he has earned a secure place among the poets who are thoroughly American in spirit and in subject-matter.

**Eugene Field.** Eugene Field (1850-1895) was born in St. Louis, Missouri, September 3, 1850, and died in Chicago, November 4, 1895, having just completed his forty-fifth year. He was taken to New England for his early education, and he finished what academic training he had at the University of Missouri. He sacrificed his degree to make a six months' tour of Europe. At twenty-three Field began his

journalistic career as a reporter on *The St. Louis Evening Journal*, and after working on a number of papers he rose



*From a photograph taken by Max Platz, Chicago*  
EUGENE FIELD

to a permanent position on *The Chicago Daily News*, in which paper for the last twelve years of his life he conducted a unique column called "Sharps and Flats." This was a series of miscellanies in prose and poetry, covering a wide range of interests, by turns humorous, farcical, grotesque, pathetic, and serious. The material in the "Sharps and

Flats" column was largely local in appeal, and in spite of its cleverness has now naturally lost much of its force.

*Field's books.* In 1890 appeared two thin volumes of Field's productions—*A Little Book of Profitable Tales* and *A Little Book of Western Verse*. From this time on, his popularity steadily grew, although he lived to enjoy only five years of the vogue created by the publication of these books. Two other volumes, *With Trumpet and Drum* and *Love Songs of Childhood*, containing old and new poems, appeared just before his death.

*His personality.* Eugene Field was possessed of a lovable personality. He was interested in children of all classes and was an idealist in his home, where he had a devoted wife and eight children of his own. He was extremely sympathetic toward animal life, companionable and magnetic among all classes of people, full of sentiment and imaginative idealism, and yet, like many another genius, he was erratic, extravagant, unconventional in his habits, and obsessed with his own peculiar fads and fancies. His best work was his inimitable child verse. He has been called "one of the sweetest singers in American literature and incomparably the noblest bard of childhood." His delicate sentiment, imaginative quality, and unconscious sincerity lift his child verse into the realm of art, and he is thus assured a unique niche in the American temple of poetic fame. His best known child pieces are "A Dutch Lullaby (Wynken, Blynken, and Nod)," "Little Boy Blue," "Jest 'Fore Christmas," and "Seein' Things at Night." His two most significant moods—the imaginatively sentimental and the pathetic—are illustrated in the "Dutch Lullaby" and "Little Boy Blue." "In the Firelight" is an example of childhood experience glorified through reminiscence into a noble expression of faith.

**James Whitcomb Riley.** If poetic merit should be judged merely by popularity with the reading public and with



lecture audiences, James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916), "The Hoosier Poet," would undoubtedly outrank all other American poets with the possible single exception of Longfellow. He was born in the town of Greenfield, Indiana, October 7, 1849 (other dates from 1851 to 1853 frequently given are now held to be incorrect), and lived all his life in his native state, his residence being during his late years on the retired little Lockerbie Street in Indianapolis. As a youth he is described as a delicate and slender lad with corn-silk hair, wide blue eyes, large nose, and freckled face. But he was not, as one might suppose from this description and from reading many of his later dialect poems, an uncouth, poverty-stricken country boy. On the contrary, he was the son of a well-to-do lawyer in a moderate sized central Indiana town of the mid-nineteenth century. He did not take full advantage of his school opportunities, however, preferring to spend his time loitering around the country, filling his mind with the images and experiences which he was later to enshrine so sympathetically and truly in his reminiscent verse.

*Riley's wanderings as a sign painter.* His tendency toward artistic expression early manifested itself in his ability to play by ear on several musical instruments and in his talent for drawing. At sixteen he learned the house-and sign-painting trade and went about the country for two years with several companions, practicing his vocation. Then he was induced to try reading law in his father's office for a time, but when, as he declares, he found out that there were no rimes in the law books, he "slipped out of the office one summer afternoon when all outdoors was calling imperiously, shook the last dusty premise from [his] head, and was away." He found an opening more to his taste at that period of his life with a traveling medicine man. His duties were to paint or draw the advertisements, assist the troupe of actors, remodel their songs and scenes, and

perhaps take part in the acting and mimicry himself, for which, by the way, he had a decided talent.

*Riley's early poems:* "*The Ole Swimmin' Hole.*" He was continually trying himself out in original poems which he sent to local newspapers. Once he published "*Leonainie,*" a poem which he pretended was signed "E. A. P." on the flyleaf of an old volume owned by Edgar Allan Poe. So successful was the hoax that it attracted nation-wide comment, many critics accepting the verses as a genuine work of Poe's. A storm of indignant protest arose when the trick was discovered, and Riley says that as a result he lost his position on *The Anderson Democrat*, a local paper on which he was working at the time. He was immediately called to join the staff of *The Indianapolis Journal*, however, and it was in this paper that he first began the long series of dialect poems purporting to come from a simple and unsophisticated farmer, Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the original "*Hoosier Poet.*" Riley prepared long illiterate letters explaining how he, Johnson, came to write these poems, and how the tears rolled down his cheeks sometimes as he wrote. "*The Ole Swimmin' Hole*" was the first of the series published in the *Journal* in 1882, and in 1883 appeared Riley's first volume, *The Ole Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems.*

*Riley's popularity as poet and public reader.* Through a long series of years there continued to flow from his pen poem after poem until he became one of our most voluminous poets. The public bought his books by the hundreds of thousands and still clamored for more. He was called before the public to give readings, and he later became one of the most popular entertainers, vying for public favor with Bill Nye, Mark Twain, Robert J. Burdette, Eugene Field, and George W. Cable, with each of whom he held joint readings.

*Later honors accorded to Riley.* It was a long time before Riley was recognized by the older and more cultured Eastern poets and critics, but he finally won praise from practically



JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

all of them. Longfellow wrote him an encouraging letter early in his career; Lowell introduced him to a New York City audience as a true poet; Holmes, Howells, Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris, Rudyard Kipling, and scores of others gave him high praise for touching the hearts of the people with his homely dialect pieces, his child poems, and his more serious and elevated lyrics. He was honored with degrees by several of our leading universities, and on October 7, 1911, the schools of Indiana, and in 1912, the school children of the whole country celebrated Riley's birthday with appropriate exercises. He died July 22, 1916.

**William Vaughn Moody.** William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910) is as yet far from being a widely known poet, and perhaps he will never be a widely popular one; but like Sidney Lanier he will no doubt have a steady growth of fame, and in the estimation of those who are prepared to recognize his artistic work in the subtle metrical harmonies and the deeper interpretative thought of the modern world, he will surely take his place as one of our major American poets. He has done creditable work in literary criticism and the history of literature, and creative work in the pure lyric, in the poetic drama, and in the prose or acting drama; and although he died before reaching the full development of his genius, he accomplished enough to make him the most important of the younger poets of America.

*Moody's education.* He was born at Spencer, Indiana, July 8, 1869. About three years after his birth his parents moved to New Albany on the Ohio River. Here he grew into young manhood only to be doubly orphaned by the death of his mother when he was fifteen and of his father two years later. Left to his own resources at this immature age, he determined to secure for himself the best possible education. He taught school for a while near New Albany, and then went to New York to become an assistant teacher in an academy where he could himself obtain further instruction.



WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

After a little time Moody entered Harvard University and continued his undergraduate work there for four years. He then went abroad as a tutor in a private family.

*Moody as teacher and poet.* After a memorable year in

Europe, he returned to Harvard and entered upon graduate work. Two years later, in 1894, he was graduated with the Master's degree, and the next year he became an instructor in English in the University of Chicago. With numerous vacation intermissions he continued in the work of teaching until 1902, when he permanently relinquished his professional position to devote himself to creative writing. During the years spent in Chicago he made several trips abroad and a number of bicycle and walking tours in his own country with friends. He loved outdoor life, and had an insatiable desire to mix with all classes of people and thus see life at all sorts of angles. His friendships were important to him, and no man perhaps ever had more devoted and intimate companions. In collaboration with Professor Robert M. Lovett, he prepared a textbook on the history of English literature, and the success of this volume, and of several other books which he edited for school use, enabled him to carry out his long-cherished design of giving up entirely his work in the classroom.

*Moody's better poems.* He had been contributing poems to the best magazines since his Harvard University days, but it was not until toward the close of the nineties that he began to find his individual note. In 1900 he contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* what he considered his best lyric,—namely, "Gloucester Moors." Among his other distinctive poems are "The Brute," a poem after the manner of Kipling, on machinery and its effects on modern life; "The Menagerie," a delightful Browning-like treatment of the theme of evolution from the point of view of a half-drunken man fresh from the menagerie of a circus; "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" and "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," passionate outcries against American imperialism; and "The Daguerreotype," a wonderful tribute to the memory of his mother. Professor John M. Manly, of the University of Chicago, says that this last poem is "so

deep of thought, so full of poignant feeling and clairvoyant vision, so wrought of passionate beauty that I know not where to look for another tribute from any poet to his mother that equals it."

*His poetic dramas.* Moody's most ambitious work was his unfinished trilogy of poetic dramas, "The Fire-bringer," "The Masque of Judgment," and "The Death of Eve." The last, which was to round out and complete the series, is left in fragmentary form, but the final theme is more or less adequately treated in the blank verse poem of the same title. There is a wonderful array of fine poetry here, but the number of readers who can fully appreciate the quality of Moody's art is unfortunately limited. Professor Manly says that Moody's poetry even in its simplest forms does not always reveal its meaning to the careless and casual reader, and most young readers will find these dramas to be a severe test upon their intellectual and interpretative powers. But such poetry has in it lasting qualities and will always repay the student for his efforts to comprehend and appreciate it. Some of Moody's finest lyrics, too, are imbedded in these blank verse dramas.

*His acting plays.* The third type of writing in which Moody succeeded admirably was that of the prose or acting drama. "The Great Divide" is perhaps the most original and successful native play produced on the American stage within the past quarter century. "The Faith Healer" was not so popular with the playgoing public, but it is a composition of wonderful literary appeal, and if not so good as an acting play, is certainly worthy of remembrance as a literary drama.

*Moody's premature death: Professor Manly's estimate.* In spite of his outdoor habits and simple living Moody's health failed in 1909, and after a few months of happiness in his marriage with Harriet V. Brainerd, a woman whose companionship had meant much to him for several years

preceding their marriage, he succumbed on October 17, 1910, cut off, as it were, in the full flush of his genius. Shortly after Moody's death Professor Manly prepared the standard edition of his poems and dramas with an excellent introduction, in which he admirably epitomizes the forceful qualities of this new poet's work in these words: "Moody's poetry, whether due to a direct impulse from life or suggested, like 'The Dialogue in Purgatory' and 'The Fountain' and 'Thamuz,' by literature, is notable for its freedom from response to the obvious, the trivial, the merely pretty. This is, no doubt, one reason why, for all his rich and various melody, his wealth of fresh and vivid imagery, his modernity, his worship of beauty and love, his depth of spiritual emotion, he is not popular, is indeed hardly remembered by any except those to whom poetry is not an idle pastime, but a passion; for the idler wants art in all its forms to be obvious and trivial and pretty. Moody's themes are often the common themes of poetry: love, patriotism, human suffering, God, and the soul. But he sees them ever from a new angle, he finds in them new significance, he mingles them with unaccustomed but predestined associations. His vision and feeling are not simple, but interwoven with rich threads of reflection and transmuting emotion."

#### OTHER WESTERN POETS

**Introductory Statement.** Among the more important remaining Western poets are John Hay, author of *Pike County Ballads*; and Edward Rowland Sill, of California. The more modern group of the so-called "New Poetry" writers may be represented by Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandburg, both of Chicago; Vachel Lindsay, of Springfield, Illinois; and John Gould Fletcher, of Little Rock, Arkansas.

**John Hay.** John Hay (1838-1905) is probably thought of more frequently as a diplomat and a statesman than as a literary man, but the time may come when his fame will



rest more surely on his literary productions than on his political achievements. He was born and reared in Indiana, but he practiced law in Springfield, Illinois, the home of Abraham Lincoln, and he is thought of as belonging to the last-named state. President Lincoln appointed the young lawyer to be his private secretary in 1861, and the remainder of Hay's life was spent largely in public service of one kind or another. He was for a number of years attached to various diplomatic posts abroad, the most important being the ambassadorship to England under President McKinley. Finally Hay was called to America to become Secretary of State under President McKinley, and in this position he rendered very valuable service to the nation during the Boxer uprising in China. Hay's literary productions include *Pike County Ballads* (1871); *Castilian Days* (1871), a sort of Spanish sketch book which grew out of its author's experiences in the diplomatic service at Madrid; and *The Bread-Winners* (1883), a novel which he published anonymously for fear that his acknowledgment of its authorship might affect unfavorably his influence and service as a public man. The ballads were first published in some obscure Western paper, but they also appeared later in *The New York Tribune*, when Hay, for a brief period during his young manhood, was on the editorial staff of that paper. They were rough-hewn dialect ballads dealing with the pioneer life of the Middle West. Their coarse and uncouth realism in thought and language, their embodiment of the humorous and the heroic ideals of the typical Westerner, the rawest of whom was said to hail from Pike County, Missouri, struck a quick response in the public esteem, and these six short ballads of John Hay's are today far more widely known than any of his purer and by him more highly esteemed lyric verse. "Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle" and "Little Breeches" are the most popular of the ballads, though the others are made from exactly the same bolt of

homespun and are almost equally good. Humor, sympathy, courage, independence, heroism are the chief characteristics, though there is also a note of pathos. The story of the heroic pilot who held the nose of the burning "Prairie Belle," a Mississippi steamer, to the bank until all her passengers were safely landed, losing his own life in the event, has moved many a reader to tears. The pathos is evident in the last stanza.

He weren't no saint, — but at jedgment  
I'd run my chance with Jim,  
'Longside of some pious gentlemen  
That wouldn't shook hands with him.  
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —  
And went for it thar and then;  
And Christ ain't a-going to be too hard  
On a man that died for men.

**Edward Rowland Sill.** Though born in Massachusetts and educated at Yale, Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887) moved to the Far West to engage in business (1861-1866). He went back to the East to study for the ministry, but became a teacher, locating first in an academy in Ohio and later in the Oakland High School in California, and then (1874-1882) he accepted the position of professor of English literature in the University of California at Berkeley. He finally retired and returned to Ohio to devote himself to literature but died within a few years. His successive shifts make him a kind of shuttle between the East and the West; but he did his best work in the West, so that he may fairly be called a Western writer. In fact, the greater part of his poetry is based on Western themes; in many of his shorter poems there are evidences of this in both title and treatment, and "The Hermitage," his longest poem, is a magnificent panorama of the beautiful scenery of coast and mountain and stream and lake in the wonderland of the West.

Let me arise, and away  
To the land that guards the dying day,  
Whose burning tear, the evening-star,  
Drops silently to the wave afar;  
The land where summers never cease  
Their sunny psalm of light and peace,  
Whose moonlight, poured for years untold,  
Has drifted down in dust of gold;  
Whose morning splendors, fallen in showers,  
Leave ceaseless sunrise in the flowers.

The purity and sweetness of Sill's language, the sureness and sanity of his moral insight, and the epigrammatic quality of some of his best poems, notably "The Fool's Prayer," will undoubtedly give long life to his work. He died when he was just reaching his maturity as a poet, and while his achievement is notable even as it is, there is little doubt but that, had he lived, Sill would have given the world a still greater body of worthy poetry. His work should be better known than it is. Such poems as "The Fool's Prayer," "Opportunity," "The Contrast," "Life," "On Second Thought," "Tempted" will prove to be extremely stimulating and inspiring to thoughtful young readers as well as to older ones. We reproduce one of these epigrammatic poems as well worth committing to memory.

#### LIFE

Forenoon and afternoon and night,— Forenoon,  
And afternoon, and night,— Forenoon, and — what!  
The empty song repeats itself. No more?  
Yea, that is Life: make this forenoon sublime,  
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,  
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won.

**Minor poets.** We can only give the names of a few of the minor poets of the West: John James Piatt (1835-), of Indiana, associated with W. D. Howells in their first volume, *Poems of Two Friends* (1860), and the author of several other volumes of verse; Maurice Thompson (1844-1901), of Indiana, author of many lyrics, but better known

as a novelist; Will Carleton (1845-1912), of Michigan, author of many popular and sentimental ballads of no very high literary value, such as "Betsy and I Are Out" and "Over the Hill to the Poor House"; John Vance Cheney (1848-), born in the state of New York, but associated with the Pacific slope, writer of excellent lyric verse; Edwin Markham (1852-), of Oregon, famous as the author of



After the painting by Jean François Millet  
THE MAN WITH THE HOE

"The Man with the Hoe"; Sara Teasdale (1884-) (Mrs. Ernst B. Filsinger since 1914), of St. Louis, one of the most skilful and artistic of recent lyrists, author of *Sonnets to Duse and Other Poems* (1907), *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911), *Rivers to the Sea* (1915), and *Love Poems*, this last being awarded the Pulitzer prize in the School of Journalism, Columbia University, as the best poetical contribution for the year 1918; and Howard Mumford Jones (1892-), of Wisconsin, now professor of English in the University of

Montana, author of a metrical translation of Heine's *North Sea* (1916), "The Convocation Ode" (Chicago University, 1915), and *Gargoyles* (1918), a volume of somewhat humorously, not to say cynically, grotesque and yet fluent and vigorous poetry.

**Edwin Markham's "The Man with the Hoe."** Perhaps of all these Edwin Markham has reached the widest public. His style at its best is somewhat rhetorical and his lines sometimes become rather flat and prosy, especially when he attempts to convey his moral and socialistic teachings through conventional poetical mediums. "The Man with the Hoe," inspired by Millet's famous picture of this title, is the best example of Markham's highly emotional and rhetorical verse. In its impassioned interpretation of the cause of the laboring classes, this poem has been hailed as "the battle-cry of the next thousand years."

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face  
And on his back the burden of the world.  
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,  
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?  
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?  
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?  
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?  
  
Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave  
To have dominion over sea and land;  
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;  
To feel the passion of Eternity?  
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns  
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?  
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf  
There is no shape more terrible than this—  
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—  
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—  
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!  
 Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him  
 Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?  
 What the long reaches of the peaks of song,  
 The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?  
 Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;  
 Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;  
 Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,  
 Plundered, profaned and disinherited,  
 Cries protest to the judges of the world,  
 A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
 Is this the handiwork you give to God,  
 This monstrous thing, distorted and soul-quenched?  
 How will you ever straighten up this shape;  
 Touch it again with immortality;  
 Give back the upward looking and the light;  
 Rebuild in it the music and the dream;  
 Make right the immemorial infamies,  
 Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,  
 How will the future reckon with this Man?  
 How answer his brute question in that hour  
 When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?  
 How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—  
 With those who shaped him to the thing he is—  
 When this dumb terror shall appeal to God,  
 After the silence of the centuries?

#### THE NEW POETRY IN THE WEST

**Edgar Lee Masters.** Among the modern or "New Poetry" poets Edgar Lee Masters (1869-) is, in the opinion of most critics, the most powerful. A descendant of an old Virginia family of the pioneering type on his father's side and from Puritan stock on his mother's, he was born in Kansas and brought at an early age into Illinois. After one year at college he began to prepare himself for the practice of law by studying in his father's law office at



EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Lewiston, Illinois, and then moved to Chicago to improve his fortunes. He has confessed that the music of Burns and Shelley kept running through his brain, and he could not resist the impulse to write poetry. In fact, he wrote several hundreds of poems in the ordinary verse forms before he came to write in the new form known as free-verse. He

felt that he needed some new medium in which to present the dead monotony and crass realism of Middle Western village life. He makes Petit, the Spoon River poet, confess that he saw

Life all around me here in the village:  
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,  
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure —  
All in the loom, and oh what patterns!

and that he (Petit) was utterly unable to express all this in the conventional verse forms:

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,  
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,  
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines?

It was in *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, founded at Chicago in 1912, by Harriet Monroe, that Mr. Masters discovered the new free-verse, and he recognized at once that it was exactly the medium which he needed. William Marion Reedy, of St. Louis, urged him to throw off all conventions and write something strictly American in form and content, and Mr. Masters began to strike off and publish in *Reedy's Mirror* (St. Louis) those brilliant character sketches for which he has since become famous. In 1915 he collected these unique poems under the title of *Spoon River Anthology*. It is perhaps not too much to say that the book created a sensation in literary circles. No book of poetry since Longfellow's popular volumes has had so wide a circulation, and none since Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* has been more vigorously stimulating or shown more originality. Everybody who is interested in recent literature has read and talked about *Spoon River Anthology*. Spoon River is the fictitious name of a Middle Western town, and the Anthology is supposed to be a collection of epitaphs written upon the lives of the inhabitants who lie buried in the cemetery. In most instances



the dead persons are supposed to speak the real truth about themselves, and thus the author is permitted to reveal the inner secrets of the whole fabric of life about him. Not only are the individuals portrayed in bold outline and crass realism, but the life of the entire village is gradually reproduced and clearly revealed. There are a few family groups and related portraits, and there is frequent allusion reaching over from one portrait to another; and when all of the more than two hundred persons are before us, we suddenly realize that we have a complete cross section of society as it exists in this Middle Western town of Spoon River. There is no story, no hero, no heroine, no major characters and minor characters, but just the unvarnished truth about each member of the village society; and lo, when we have read all the epitaphs, we have a complete picture of the village before us. There has been some objection to the book because in it Mr. Masters seems to paint too dark a picture. He reveals the ugly side of American life in all its coarseness, sensuality, sordidness, and hypocrisy. He seems to over-emphasize the bad and to say too little about the good. There is truth in his realistic presentation, to be sure, but there is another and a better side to human nature, and those who will read on to the end of *Spoon River Anthology* will find that Mr. Masters realizes this. Toward the close of his book particularly he portrays an unselfish idealism and a genuine belief in the essential purity and aspiration of American life and human nature at large. Masters is often frank even to vulgarity and brutality, but underlying all his apparent cynicism is a spirit of hopeful optimism and sincere sympathy. On the whole, *Spoon River Anthology* offers too strong meat for young readers, but now and then a pure heart speaks in sincere accents that young readers will enjoy. Take the following picture of the old-maid school teacher, supposed to be modeled on the poet's own early teacher:

## EMILY SPARKS

Where is my boy, my boy —  
 In what far part of the world?  
 The boy I loved best of all in the school? —  
 I, the teacher, the old maid, the virgin heart,  
 Who made them all my children.  
 Did I know my boy aright,  
 Thinking of him as spirit aflame,  
 Active, ever aspiring?  
 Oh, boy, boy, for whom I prayed and prayed  
 In many a watchful hour at night,

Do you remember the letter I wrote you  
 Of the beautiful love of Christ?  
 And whether you ever took it or not,  
 My boy, wherever you are,  
 Work for your soul's sake,  
 That all the clay of you, all of the dross of you,  
 May yield to the fire of you,  
 Till the fire is nothing but light!  
 Nothing but light!

And "Reuben Pantier" answers, beginning his story thus:

Well, Emily Sparks, your prayers were not wasted,  
 Your love was not all in vain.  
 I owe whatever I was in life  
 To your hope that would not give me up,  
 To your love that saw me still as good.

In his latest books, *The Great Valley* (1917) and *Toward the Gulf* (1918), Mr. Masters has attempted, with a large measure of success, to do for the Central West, that is, "the great valley" of the Mississippi as it sweeps "toward the Gulf," what he did for a single town of this same section in *Spoon River Anthology*. He has drunk deeply of the pure stream of democracy as it flowed through Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman, and as a result his work may be called a "true epic of American life."

**Carl Sandburg.** Carl Sandburg (1878-) reminds one rather strongly of Walt Whitman. He was born of Swedish

ancestry in Galesburg, Illinois, and has had a varied experience in many parts of the West, working at many jobs and being thrown intimately with many sorts of toilers. He succeeded in getting a fairly good education, and he has been connected with several of the more recent socialistic movements in Wisconsin and other states. He is the poet of Chicago in particular, just as Walt Whitman was of Mannahatta, or New York. He is also the poet of social democracy. His two volumes *Chicago Poems* (1916) and *Cornhuskers* (1918), are his chief contributions thus far to the so-called New Poetry. The opening poem in this volume, "Chicago," is his best known single production. This poem was first printed in *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, in 1914, and was awarded a prize of \$200 as the best American poem of the year. Its lines will remind the student at once of Walt Whitman, but there is something new and fresh here also; the poem will also afford some idea of Mr. Sandburg's terrific strength and imaginative power.

#### CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the big shoulders:  
They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your  
    painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.  
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have  
    seen the gunmen kill and go free to kill again.  
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of  
    women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.  
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this  
    my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:  
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be  
    alive and coarse and strong and cunning.  
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a  
    tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;  
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage  
    pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,  
 Shoveling,  
 Wrecking,  
 Planning,  
 Building, breaking, rebuilding,  
 Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,  
 Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,  
 Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,  
 Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his  
     ribs the heart of the people,  
     Laughing!  
 Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked,  
     sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of  
     Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

*Cornhuskers* (1918), Mr. Sandburg's latest book, is redolent of country and town in the great corn-growing section. It is composed in the same Whitman-like type of free verse which made *Chicago Poems* notable. "Prairie," the opening poem, is a long series of flash-light pictures of rural and urban life in the great Middle West, and practically every other poem in the volume shouts or sings or whispers some phase of the throbbing life which Mr. Sandburg knows so intimately and loves so sincerely.

**Vachel Lindsay.** Another strikingly unconventional Western poet is Nicholas Vachel Lindsay (1879-), who was born in Springfield, Illinois, educated in the high school there and at Hiram College in Ohio, and later studied art at the Chicago Art Institute and the New York School of Art. After doing some lecturing in the interests of the Anti-Saloon League for the Y. M. C. A. settlement work in New York, he returned to Illinois and spent a year or two lecturing in the interests of the Anti-Saloon League. Then in 1909 he began his famous tramp from Illinois to New Mexico, preaching, as he said, "the gospel of beauty" along the way. He sold copies of his own verses, *Rhymes to be Traded for Bread* (1912), and recited them wherever he could gather an audience. Later he recorded his experiences

in a prose volume interspersed with poems, which he called *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914). He repeated this experiment in other tramping excursions. Lindsay first attracted wide attention by his poem "General William Booth Enters Heaven," which appeared in *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, January, 1913, and was published in a volume with other poems in 1914. His second volume of poetry, *The Congo and Other Poems*, was published in 1915. He attempts to interpret American life, particularly in the great cities and in the rural sections of the Middle West, from the point of view of the average citizen rather than from that of the educated critic. Poems like "The Congo," representing negro life; "The Fireman's Ball," and "A Rhyme about an Electrical Advertising Sign" come out of his experiences in the cities, while "The Santa Fé Trail" and "An Indian Summer Day on the Prairie" are the product of his tramps in the West. One striking peculiarity of Lindsay's poems is his marginal glosses or notes, in which he tells the reader exactly how to read or recite the verses, for he believes poetry for the people should be recited or sung rather than merely silently read. He conceives his setting exactly as a dramatist would do, and gives full elocutionary or stage directions to accompany the oral rendition. He is said to be successful in reciting his own productions, and of course he wants others to read his poems exactly as he has conceived them. Besides the work already mentioned, Lindsay has written a number of good religious lyrics, such as "I Heard Immanuel Singing," and some quaint children's poems. It may be that he will be remembered chiefly as an oddity or freak in the modern poetical movement, but there is no use in our denying the fact that Lindsay is possessed of an unusual imagination and an elemental sweep and power of expression which may yet carry him far beyond his contemporaries.

**John Gould Fletcher.** John Gould Fletcher (1886-), of Little Rock, Arkansas, a graduate of Phillips Academy and a student at Harvard, and for some years thereafter a resident of London and other European cities, belongs with the imagists of England and New England rather than with the more virile representatives of the "New Poetry" of the West. He draws his inspiration from his own personal experiences, however, as is clearly shown by the series of twenty-five impressionistic poems concerning his life in his father's home at Little Rock, all of which are gathered under the larger title of "The Ghosts of an Old House" in *Goblins and Pagodas*. Mr. Fletcher has a clear grasp of the latest theories of the "New Poetry." He goes about his work as a conscious artist, knowing what effects he wishes to bring out and having a marvelous command of the language and imagery necessary to produce these effects. He has expressed his advanced views rather fully and clearly in the prefaces of his three latest volumes: *Irradiations—Sand and Spray* (1915), *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), and *Japanese Prints* (1917). The following picture of trees in a wind storm will give a good idea of Mr. Fletcher's rich and vivid diction and his striking imagination.

#### IRRADIATIONS X

The trees, like great jade elephants,  
 Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;  
 The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:  
 The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies,  
 The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.  
 Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

#### MINOR WESTERN WRITERS OF FICTION

**The fiction writers classified.** There are so many popular and promising Western novelists and short-story writers that it will be necessary to select just a few of them as typical. Mark Twain and Bret Harte have already been

treated above as major writers. After these we may take General Lew Wallace, Edward Eggleston, Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, and Winston Churchill for brief treatment, and content ourselves with a bare catalogue of the other novelists and story writers, together with a few of their most noteworthy productions.

**Lew Wallace.** General Lew Wallace (1827-1905), of Indiana, first earned fame as a soldier, taking part in both the War with Mexico and the Civil War, where he finally rose to the rank of general. Just before the outbreak of the War with Mexico, while he was studying for admission to the bar at Indianapolis, Wallace read Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* and was at once fired with the ambition to write a historical novel based on the romantic background of the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs. Later his own personal experiences in Mexico added to his equipment for the task, but it was not until long after the Civil War that he finally finished his first novel, *The Fair God, a Tale of the Conquest of Mexico* (1873). This book, though fairly well planned and executed, attracted but little attention until after the appearance of its author's amazingly popular religious romance, *Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ* (1880). This last is said to have been the most widely read novel that had appeared since *Uncle Tom's Cabin* swept the country in 1852. It had in it much to commend it to the American public: it was thoroughly reverent and orthodox in its attitude toward the Christ; it was enthusiastically, vividly, and dramatically written; and it satisfied all the demands for an intensely exciting romance as well as for historical information and moral stimulus. Critics have spoken in a somewhat slighting tone of the lack of artistic merit in style and structure, of the melodramatic atmosphere, and of the pietistic or moral leanings of the book, but such criticism has had little effect in deterring thousands of eager readers from turning again and again to the pages of the romance, and other thousands

of pleased spectators from attending the elaborate dramatizations of the novel. *The Prince of India, or Why Constantinople Fell* (1893), did not satisfy the public so well as *Ben Hur* had done. In none of his novels does General Wallace represent American life. He was fascinated by foreign historical themes with a large romantic background, and it must be said that he was hardly possessed of sufficient imaginative power to fuse these historical and romantic elements into really great masterpieces. His position as a writer, then, cannot finally be a high one, but he deserves remembrance as one of the many American novelists who attracted very wide interest with their popular historical romances in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

**Edward Eggleston.** Edward Eggleston (1837-1902) will probably be remembered more for his accurate portrayal of life in the Middle West, particularly in Indiana and Minnesota, than for his purely literary excellence. A descendant of a good Virginia family, he was born in Indiana, was shifted about from place to place after the early death of his parents, entered the Methodist ministry as a circuit rider when he was nineteen, and gradually educated himself by his voracious habit of reading history, biography, and general literature. During all his early life he studied at first hand the Hoosier customs and types of character which he was to use so effectively in his later realistic novels. *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871), first published serially in *Hearth and Home*, was widely read. It is not a strong book when examined from a purely artistic viewpoint, but because of its humor, its coarse realism, and its sincere humanity and large charity, it is irresistibly attractive and universally popular, particularly among young readers. Another book in the same vein is *The Hoosier Schoolboy* (1883). *The End of the World, a Love Story* (1872) is centered around the sect of "Millerites," who taught, about 1870, that the end of the world was at hand. The scene of *The*



*Mystery of Metropolisville* (1873) is laid in Minnesota, and is the result of the author's observations of life in that state during the several years of his residence there. *The Circuit Rider, a Tale of the Heroic Age* (1874), deals with the history of Methodism in the Middle West in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This book is looked upon almost as an authentic historic document, so close to fact as revealed by history and by his own personal experiences in later years has the novelist kept. In this book Eggleston reached his highest power. He has portrayed the early life in the West with a vividness that makes it very real to his readers, and he has thus preserved for us the true historic background out of which came such characters as Presidents William Henry Harrison and Abraham Lincoln. In one of Eggleston's later works, *The Graysons, a Story of Illinois* (1888), a realistic picture of pioneer life, Abraham Lincoln actually appears as one of the characters. During his later years Eggleston became a writer of popular histories, and he was also connected editorially with several religious and literary journals, notably with *The New York Independent*.

**Hamlin Garland.** In Hamlin Garland (1860-) we find the hard realism of the Middle West farm life voicing itself. He knows his background thoroughly, and he portrays it vividly. The offspring of parents who had the common Western fever for migrating, he was born in Wisconsin and carried along with the family in their wanderings from point to point until they settled somewhat more permanently in Iowa. He managed to acquire a fairly good education, taught school in several Western states, and later in Massachusetts. He now turned his hand to writing Western stories, collecting these later in *Main-Traveled Roads*, *Six Mississippi Valley Stories* (1891), and *Prairie Folks, or Pioneer Life on the Western Prairies in Nine Stories* (1892). He says the entire series was the result of a summer vacation

visit to his old home in Iowa, to his father's farm in Dakota, and to his birthplace in Wisconsin. At the time he made this visit he was living in Boston, and he confesses that the return to the scenes of his boyhood started him upon a series of stories delineative of farm and village life as he knew it and had lived it. Thus these stories become a sort of historical transcript of Garland's own experiences, and as such they are not only interesting narratives, but really true and human presentations of Western farm life in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Mr. Garland has written many longer stories also, but none of them is quite so good in its interpretation of Western life as are his short stories. *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* (1895) and *The Eagle's Heart* (1900) may be mentioned as typical Western novels. One of the most valuable of all of Garland's books is his autobiography, *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917). It gives a truthful and satisfying picture of life in the Middle and Far West,—of the whole of America, in fact,—and at the same time it is as entertaining as a novel.

**Frank Norris.** Frank Norris (1870-1902) represents more particularly the Far West, but he is also frequently associated with the Middle West. He was born in Chicago, educated in San Francisco High School and the University of California, studied at Harvard, and then went abroad to study art at Paris. Later he became special correspondent and editor of San Francisco papers, and during the Spanish-American War he did some good magazine work. He then made himself noted as the author of fiction of the most glaringly realistic type. He held the extreme view that the novelist should tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, no matter how revolting it might be. *McTeague, a Story of San Francisco* (1899) illustrates this strong type of realism. But Norris's greatest effort was in the three novels which he planned to be what he called "an epic of the wheat." These novels when completed were intended to

portray the real facts about the complex industrial and social life of America as it revolved around the most important food product of the world. Norris explained his purpose in the preface to the second novel. He said, "These novels, while forming a series, will be in no way connected with each other save by their relation to (1) the production, (2) the distribution, (3) the consumption of American wheat. When complete they will form the story of a crop of wheat from the time of its sowing as seed in California to the time of its consumption as bread in a village of Western Europe." The novelist completed only *The Octopus, a Story of California* (1901), and *The Pit, a Story of Chicago* (1902). The third novel he intended to call *The Wolf*, proposing to make the main incident center about a famine in some European community. *The Octopus* is really an allegory dealing with the railroad trust, which, like a giant octopus, the author conceives to have its tentacles stretched everywhere over the land. He describes it as "the leviathan with tentacles of steel clutching into the soil, the soulless Force, the iron-hearted Power, the Monster, the Colossus, the Octopus." *The Pit* is the story of a speculation or corner in the Chicago wheat exchange. These two stories are powerfully written, and had Norris lived to complete the trilogy, he would undoubtedly have rounded out his plan so as to have made this sequence one of the most remarkably comprehensive works of modern fiction. Even as it stands his effort has a magnificent imaginative sweep and a fundamental artistic appeal.

**Winston Churchill.** It is difficult to decide whether Winston Spencer Churchill (1871-) should be classed with the Western or the New England group of novelists. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, educated at an academy in that city and at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, spent several years in general journalistic work in New York, and finally settled permanently in the artists'

colony at Cornish, New Hampshire, just across the Connecticut river from the town of Windsor, Vermont. Later he entered politics in New Hampshire and became thoroughly identified with that state. The scenes of some of his novels are laid in the West, but the political and social problem novels of his recent years deal mainly with conditions in the East. All his work, however, is more or less general and national rather than local in character, and on the whole he seems to belong with the group of Western writers who have attempted to express in their novels the broad national or democratic ideal known as Americanism. His three important historical novels are *Richard Carvel* (1899), the scene of which is laid principally in Maryland covering the whole of the Revolutionary period; *The Crisis* (1901), which opens in St. Louis just before the Civil War and covers the whole of that critical period in our history, introducing Abraham Lincoln in a rather large way; and *The Crossing* (1904), a picturesque narrative of "the crossing of the Alleghanies" by the early pioneers, such as Daniel Boone and his companions, the development of the great movement for westward expansion through the Louisiana Purchase, and the exploring expedition of Lewis and Clark. Of his other works two are political novels dealing with conditions in New Hampshire: *Coniston* (1906) portraying the career of Jethro Bass, a typical political boss during the administration of President Grant; and *Mr. Crewe's Career* (1908), a continuation of the same theme, a searching satire on railroad domination of state politics. Two of his later works are American social studies, turning largely on marriage and business problems: *A Modern Chronicle* (1910), a love story opening in St. Louis and moving on to New York and Virginia, then back to the starting point; *A Far Country* (1915), a highly generalized study of the rise of big business methods at the end of the nineteenth century. Finally, *The Inside of the Cup* (1913) deals in a

rather frank and startling way with the inner social workings of a rich twentieth-century American church. It will be observed that each of these novels takes up some big theme, and it will be found that the treatment is broad and epic in character rather than narrow and personal. An attempt is made to portray primarily some great historical, political, or social problem, and the characters and personal narrative are made to elucidate the theme. The characters are well drawn and peculiarly attractive as human beings, it is true, and the reader becomes intensely interested in their fortunes as the story progresses; but they seem to be merely a part of the greater social or national movement which the author portrays as sweeping them on or engulfing them in its stream. The first three of Churchill's novels have been called historical, but in truth all his books may be called historical or interpretative of American life in a chronological sequence from the Revolution to present times. These eight novels are all well worth reading, for Churchill is a careful and painstaking workman both in the collecting and marshaling of his facts and in his literary style. Perhaps younger readers should be content at first to take up the three earlier novels in their chronological order — *Richard Carvel*, *The Crossing*, *The Crisis*. The first and last of these are connected by the interesting device of making the heroine of the last, Virginia Carvel, to appear as the great-great-granddaughter of the hero of the first.

**Western women story writers.** Among the women novelists of the West, the following are the most notable: Helen Hunt Jackson<sup>1</sup> (1831-1885), poet and novelist, author of *Ramona* (1884), a strong story intended to arouse sympathy for the mistreated Indian, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had previously done for the Southern negro; Mary Hartwell Catherwood (1847-1902), of Ohio, writer of romantic stories

<sup>1</sup> Miss Helen Maria Fiske, born in Amherst, Massachusetts, was first married to Captain Hunt and frequently signed her early works "H. H." She later married a Mr. Jackson of Colorado.

of Indian life in the earlier period of French settlements in Canada and the Middle West, such as *The Romance of Dollard* (1889), *Old Kaskaskia* (1893), *Lazarre* (1901); Mary Hallock Foote (1847-), writer of stories dealing with primitive life in the West, such as *The Led Horse Claim* (1883), *Coeur d'Alene* (1894); Octave Thanet (1850-), in real life Alice French, author of sympathetic and artistic short stories revealing life in Iowa and Arkansas, as in *Knitters in the Sun* (1887), *Stories of a Western Town* (1893), *The Heart of Toil* (1898); Gertrude Atherton (1857-), of San Francisco, writer of novels dealing with life in the West, such as *The Californians* (1898), and also with general social and political life in the East, as in *Patience Sparhawk* (1897) and *Senator North* (1900), treating respectively of New York and Washington society, and *The Conqueror* (1902), a historical romance with Alexander Hamilton as the chief figure; Dorothy Canfield (1879-), now Mrs. J. R. Fisher, born in Kansas and educated in Ohio State and Columbia Universities, author of *The Squirrel Cage* (1912), a novel which attacks the senseless education of girls to physical invalidism, and *The Bent Twig* (1915), an excellent study of life in a state university of the Middle West; and Kathleen Norris (1880-), of San Francisco, writer of realistic novels of present-day social life, such as *Mother* (1911) and *The Heart of Rachel* (1916).

**Other Western novelists.** The popular Western novelists include Maurice Thompson (1844-1901), of Indiana, poet, essayist, and novelist, author of *Alice of Old Vincennes* (1901), a stirring tale of Revolutionary times and one of the most widely read novels of its decade; Henry Blake Fuller (1857-), of Chicago, author of realistic present-day studies in city life, as in *The Cliff Dwellers* (1893), *With the Procession* (1895); Frederic Remington (1861-1909), painter of Western pictures and writer of Western short stories, as in *Crooked Trails* (1898), *Men with the Bark On* (1900);

William Allen White (1868-), of Kansas, author of *The Court of Boyville* (1899), a sequence of delightfully human and playfully humorous stories of boy life in the Middle West, and *A Certain Rich Man* (1909), a novel dealing with the rapid growth of a Western town and the making of a modern millionaire; Robert Herrick (1868-), a professor in the University of Chicago, author of many searching and somewhat pessimistic studies in social life, particularly on the marriage problem, such as *The Common Lot* (1904), *Together* (1908); Charles D. Stewart (1868-), of Wisconsin, whose *The Fugitive Blacksmith* (1905) and *Partners of Providence* (1907), portray Western life on plain and river with both art and humor; Stewart Edward White (1873-), of Michigan, portrayer of Western mining and mountaineer types, as in *The Claim Jumpers* (1901), *The Blazed Trail* (1902); Jack London (1876-1916), of San Francisco, writer of realistic stories of outdoor adventure and animal life, as in *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *The Sea Wolf* (1904), *White Fang* (1907); and Newton Booth Tarkington (1869-), of Indiana, one of the best of the modern popular novelists. He is the author of *The Gentleman from Indiana* (1899), a study of Hoosier character; *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900) a romantic story laid in England a century or more ago; *The Two Vanrevels* (1902), a story of mistaken identity, the scene being laid in the Middle West of the mid-nineteenth century; *Cherry* (1903), a sprightly Revolutionary romance; *The Turmoil* (1915), his most ambitious work, a searching study of modern business methods in a big city; *Penrod* (1914), and *Penrod and Sam* (1916), short stories presenting a live American boy of twelve with his companions; *Seventeen* (1916), a delightful picture of an American youth at the impressionable age of seventeen; and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), a story of a wealthy American family in a present-day midland town.

## FINAL WORDS

**The present literary outlook.** It is dangerous to enter into any prophecy as to the future of American literature or even as to the permanency of the work of those writers who have already gained a wide present-day fame; but as we close our brief survey of American literature, we may certainly be pardoned if we are somewhat optimistic as to our literary future. There never was a time when so many of our citizens were so vitally interested in reading new and old books, never a time when so many old and new books were being printed and circulated, and never a time when so many writers were experimenting in new artistic forms of literature as at present. The magazines are more and more widely distributed among our citizenship; the weekly periodicals and the daily papers count their subscribers by the hundreds of thousands and even by millions. Special magazines dealing with poetry, or drama, or fiction in its various forms, or criticism, flourish; publishers are besieged with manuscripts from every nook and corner of the land; new writers are springing up every day; and the whole nation seems to be gathering its strength and resources for a period of great artistic productivity. The material wealth of our nation is greater than that of any other nation in the world. This wealth brings the leisure necessary to the development of art and also furnishes the means for satisfying the natural desire to possess the productions of art. Even the great masses of the common people everywhere are becoming more and more widely educated, so that the whole population is demanding a part in the enjoyment of the art products of the race.

**Interest in poetry.** Fiction has held the place of chief interest during the last quarter or even half century; perhaps the novel and the short story may still be said to flourish as the favorite forms of popular art with the great mass of American readers. But during the past four or five years



the interest in pure poetry and literary drama has increased by leaps and bounds, so that at present, to use Matthew Arnold's statement, "the future of poetry is immense." Hundreds of new volumes of poems and plays are coming out every year. The magazines are giving more and more space to these forms of art, and even the newspapers are reviving the "Poets' Corners" and publishing poems in almost every issue. Thousands of our soldiers have been trying in their own way, often crude and rugged, it is true, to express the new ideas and aspirations surging through their minds and to record in song, or rimed chronicle at least, the marvelous experiences through which they have passed. There are also many new books of criticism and comment on present-day poetry and drama, and these are almost without exception encouraging as to the future of our poetry. Some critics think that for the first time in our history the great majority of our poets are beginning to reflect the real American spirit. The earlier poets, say these critics, were mere imitators of various English and foreign models. They took their themes, their language, their verse forms, their imagery, their inspiration straight from European sources. Whitman alone among the earlier poets seemed to strike a peculiarly original American note in his "barbaric yawp, sounding over the roofs of the world." He it was who prophesied that there would some day arise a great democratic chorus of singers in America.

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear;  
Those of mechanics — each one singing his, as it should be, blithe  
and strong;  
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off  
work;  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat — the deck-  
hand singing on the steamboat deck;  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench — the hatter singing  
as he stands;

The wood-cutter's song—the ploughboy's, on his way in the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at sundown;

The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;

The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

To-day we are almost beginning to see the fulfilment of this prophecy. Our poets are finding a more and more distinctly American and democratic note.

**Appreciation of the old and cordial reception of the new.**

In their enthusiasm for the new, some of our modern critics have turned against the old writers and attacked them as if the work of the past were worthless and contemptible in the light of the present advancement in art. But there is no need to defame or decry our earlier productions in order to welcome and applaud this new type of art. The stream of literature is continuous. There are sweet waters and soothing breezes and green trees and bright flowers all along the way, and everywhere we can find beauty mirrored in a thousand attractive forms. Why may we not love and cleave to the old, the standard writers, and at the same time welcome with glad acclaim the new? The aim should be to cultivate a sense of appreciation for good art in all ages. Young students particularly should strive to become thoroughly familiar with the great work of the past in order to be able to judge comparatively the values of the more recent productions. It is safer for them to spend most of their time studying the outstanding time-tested, thrice-winnowed masterpieces rather than to waste precious moments floundering around in the great mass of unsifted present-day productions. "Every time I hear a new book praised," said some wise man, "I read an old one."

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES  
SUITABLE FOR HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND  
OUTSIDE READING

**Special Reference Books for Nineteenth Century American Literature**  
(Starred volumes are especially valuable for high-school libraries.)

For General Reference books see page 40.

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 N. Y., 1918-.

3. *A Few Novels Dealing with Different Periods*

**Before the Civil War:**

- EGGLESTON, *The Circuit Rider* (Methodism in early Indiana);  
*Roxy* (Tippecanoe campaign in Indiana).  
 CHURCHILL, *The Crossing* (Rogers and Clark Expedition).  
 POST, *Smith Brunt: A Story of the Old Navy* (War of 1812).  
 PYLE, *Within the Capes: A Sea Story* (War of 1812).  
 MUNROE, *With Crockett and Bowie* (Texas about 1835);  
*Through Swamp and Glade* (Florida during Seminole War).  
 ATHERTON, *Before the Gringo Came* (Early California life);  
*Los Cerritos* (Southern California).  
 BARR, *Remember the Alamo* (Texas independence).  
 EGGLESTON, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (Indiana about 1840).  
 STOWE, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Slavery question about 1850).

**Civil War:**

- BENSON, *Who Goes There?*  
 CHURCHILL, *The Crisis*.  
 CABLE, *The Cavalier*.  
 COOKE, *Hilt to Hilt, Surrey of Eagle's Nest, Mohun, etc.*  
 CRANE, *The Red Badge of Courage*.  
 FREDERIC, *The Copperhead and Other Northern Stories*.  
 GLASGOW, *The Battle-Ground*.  
 JOHNSTON, *The Long Roll, Cease Firing*.  
 HARRIS, *Tales of the Home Folks in Peace and in War, On the Wing of Occasion*.  
 HENTY, *With Lee in Virginia*.  
 PAGE, *The Burial of the Guns, Marse Chan, etc.*  
 OLDHAM, *The Man from Texas*.  
 TROWBRIDGE, *The Three Scouts, The Drummer Boy, etc.*

**Since the Civil War: Reconstruction, and Development of the West**

- CABLE, *John March, Southerner*.  
 PAGE, *Red Rock*.  
 SEAWELL, *Throckmorton*.  
 JACKSON, *Ramona* (Indian question).  
 OVERTON, *The Heritage of Unrest* (Indians in New Mexico).  
 WISTER, *The Virginian* (Wyoming).  
 GARLAND, *A Son of the Middle Border, etc.*  
 WHITE, *The Westerners, The Blazed Trail, etc.*  
 MARK TWAIN, *Roughing It, Life on the Mississippi, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Pudd'n-Head Wilson, etc.*

# CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF CHIEF 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN WRITERS

| 1770   | 1780 | 1790 | 1800 | 1810   | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1917 |
|--|------|------|------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>I. NEW YORK AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES</b>  |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>FRANKLIN (1706 - 1790)</b><br>Autobiography<br>(Written 1771-1789)  |      |      |      | (Heavy Black Line Shows Period of Greatest Productivity) |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>FRENEAU (1752 - 1832)</b><br>Best Poems 1786 - 1795   |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>BROWN (1771 - 1810)</b><br>Best Novels 1796-1801  |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>IRVING (1783 - 1859)</b><br>Knickerbocker 1809<br>Sketch Book 1819<br>Tales of a Traveler 1824<br>Alhambra 1832                 |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>COOPER (1789 - 1851)</b><br>Spy 1821<br>Pioneers, Pilot 1823<br>Last of the Mohicans 1826<br>Pathfinder 1840<br>Deerslayer 1841 |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>BRYANT (1794 - 1878)</b><br>Thanatopsis 1817<br>Poems 1821<br>Poems 1836<br>Poems 1854<br>Poems 1863                            |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>WHITMAN (1819 - 1892)</b><br>Leaves of Grass 1855 (ten editions to 1891)<br>Drum Taps 1865<br>Specimen Days                     |      |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

(Continued on following pages)

| 1770   | 1780 | 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1917 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| II. NEW ENGLAND GROUP                                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (Heavy Black Line Shows Period of Greatest Productivity) |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (Continued)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| EMERSON (1803 - 1882)                                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Nature 1836  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Essays 1841  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Essays 1844  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| HAWTHORNE (1804 - 1864)                                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Twice-told Tales 1837                                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Mosses 1846  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Scarlet Letter 1850                                      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| House of Seven Gables 1851                               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| LONGFELLOW (1807 - 1882)                                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Voices of the Night 1839                                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Ballads 1841   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Evangeline 1847  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| WHITTIER (1807 - 1892)                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1838   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Voices of Freedom 1849                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| In War Time 1863   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Snowbound 1866   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| HOLMES (1809 - 1894)                                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1836   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Autocrat 1849-1850                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Professor 1860   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1872 Poet  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Guardian Angel   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1861 Elsie Venner  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| THOREAU (1817 - 1862)                                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Concord and Merimac 1849                                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Walden 1856  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (1863-1892) Posthumous Works                             |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| LOWELL (1819 - 1891)                                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1844   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Commencement Ode 1865                                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Sir Launfal 1848   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Il. Biglow Papers 1866                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1871 Study Windows                                       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1866 1870 Among My Books                                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (Continued on following pages)                           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

# CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF CHIEF 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN WRITERS—CONTINUED

| 1770   | 1780 | 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1912 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| (Continued)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (Heavy Black Line Shows Period of Greatest Productivity)         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| III. SOUTHERN GROUP  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| PoE (1809—1849)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Tamerlane 1827   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Al Anaf 1829   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1831 Poems 1839 Tales  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1845 Raven   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| TIMROD (1829—1867)   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1859 Poems (1873)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| HAYNE (1830—1886)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1855 1860 Avolio 1872 Legends and Lyrics                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Sonnets 1857   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| LANIER (1842—1881)   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Poems 1876 Poems (1894)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Sonnets 1881   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| HARRIS (1848—1908)   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Uncle Remus 1880 1887 Free Joe                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Nights with Uncle Remus 1883 Aunt Minerva Ann 1899               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| O HENRY (1862—1910)  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Four Millions (1906) and Ten Other Vols. of Short Stories (1912) |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Magazine Stories 1900 Cabbages and Kings 1904                    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| (Classified on following page)                                   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |





## SUGGESTIONS FOR OUTSIDE READING AND SPECIAL STUDY COURSES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

NOTE TO TEACHERS. Since the textbook on the history of American literature is to be used largely as a handbook or a source of review and general survey based on the firsthand study of the literature itself, the teacher will necessarily desire for his students a definite course of outside reading upon which reports and set papers may be based. Hence the following outline of topics is presented merely as suggestive. The teacher will naturally modify the scope or vary the content of the suggested topics and make additional references and assignments to fit local interests, local library facilities, and the specific needs of the class or group of students undertaking the course. The assignments should be made a week or more in advance of the period or periods set apart for reports. All reports and papers should be prepared for presentation to the class, preferably by the students themselves, but in any event in summary by the teacher. As far as possible each student should be made to feel his personal responsibility in contributing something definite to the value of the course for the class as a whole. Oral reports and free discussions are extremely desirable, and these may be encouraged by assigning the same topic to two or more students. It will be unwise to spend any large proportion of the high-school course on the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods. The beginning of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of the artistic or creative period of American literature, and naturally this period will demand the major part of the high-school student's time and interest. In the lists below

it will be possible to give only a few suggestions for readings and topics of discussion on the major writers in the four larger divisions of our later writers as arranged in the present volume. While specific outlines for the minor writers cannot be given here, these authors will be found to be fairly well represented by selections in some of the anthologies mentioned below, and bibliographical references may be found in most of the histories of literature and other general reference books. Moreover, in almost every state of the Union there are now available books of selections from local authors, and these are usually supplied with biographical and critical notes as well as with additional bibliographical lists. The bibliographies in *The Cambridge History of American Literature* are especially full and scholarly. The main aim of the teacher in all this work should be to arouse the student's interest in the firsthand reading of the literature itself, as far as possible in its original form. He should strive to incite in the more advanced students some interest in a simple sort of investigative or scholarly work in the various fields of literature. The development of the reading habit should be, however, the principal aim of all elementary literature courses. Encourage the children to buy books and to circulate their privately owned volumes freely among their classmates. Insist that the school authorities equip the library with such reference and general reading books as are essential to the satisfactory presentation of the courses in literature. Library equipment should be considered at least as of equal importance with the equipment in the science laboratories.

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.** Consult the general and special bibliographies on pages 40-43, 85-87, 375-377, and also the brief bibliographical footnotes throughout the volume. As a minimum basis for classroom work the high-school library should have, in addition to four or five standard histories of American literature, at least two or more of

the following anthologies, and in the larger schools duplicate copies should be supplied to meet the needs of the increased number of students. A copy of the latest edition of *Who's Who in America* should also be provided for reference on the more recent writers.

1. CAIRNS, *Selections from Early American Writers, 1607-1800*, Macmillan, N. Y., 1900.

Contains both prose and poetry reproduced in the original form. Young students may find some difficulty in reading the early form of the text, but it will be interesting for them to observe the peculiar spelling and capitalization and the quaint, old-fashioned diction and idiom. The volume contains excellent biographical and critical introductions. It is the best single-volume anthology on early American writers.

2. TRENT AND WELLS, *Colonial Prose and Poetry*, 3 vols., Crowell, N. Y., 1901.

These three handy pocket volumes are printed in modernized text, and hence, though less characteristic of the times in which the works were produced, are much more easily intelligible to young readers. These volumes also contain good introductory notes.

3. STEDMAN AND HUTCHINSON, *Library of American Literature*, 11 vols., Benjamin, N. Y., 1888-90.

This is the standard extensive collection of American literature. The earlier selections are slightly modernized, though the original spelling is largely retained. The illustrations add much interest to the selections. Volume XI contains brief biographical sketches of American authors. If the school library does not possess this set, perhaps the books can be borrowed for a time either from the town library or from some private citizen. Such books in a private citizen's library are usually more ornamental than useful, and local civic pride will often induce such citizens to present the set to the school library, where the books may become of some use to the community.

4. NEWCOMER, ANDREWS, AND HALL, *Three Centuries of American Literature*, Scott Foresman, Chicago, 1917.

A large volume, containing over eight hundred pages of double-column matter, both prose and poetry. The most comprehensive of all the one-volume general anthologies.

5. CALHOUN AND MACALARNEY, *Readings from American Literature*, Ginn, Boston, 1915.

This is not so comprehensive as the preceding volume, but it contains much excellent material. The early selections are printed in modernized form.

6. BRONSON, *American Poems*, University of Chicago Press, 1912.

7. BRONSON, *American Prose*, University of Chicago Press, 1916.

These two companion volumes are well edited and fairly comprehensive. The texts are scrupulously accurate. The distinctive feature of the notes is the large amount of informing contemporary criticism reprinted in them. Good bibliographies.

8. PAGE, *The Chief American Poets*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1905.

Valuable because of the fullness of the selections from the nine chief poets—Bryant, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, and Lanier. The notes are few but valuable. The essays appended afford excellent biographical and critical summaries. Bibliographies especially full.

9. BOYNTON, *American Poetry*, Scribner's, N. Y., 1918.

This is more comprehensive than Page and gives a better survey of our poetry as a whole. It begins with Anne Bradstreet and concludes with William Vaughn Moody. The "Critical Comments," Part II, are fresh and comprehensive. The bibliographies are reduced to the lowest terms.

10. FOERSTER, *The Chief American Prose Writers*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1916.

A companion volume to Page's *The Chief American Poets*, containing nine prose masters—Franklin, Irving, Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Holmes. Brief select bibliographies for each author, but very few notes.

11. STEDMAN, *An American Anthology*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1900.

This is the most comprehensive single-volume anthology of American poets. Its chief merits are its range and variety of material and its particular emphasis on the minor poets.

12. PAYNE, *Selections from American Literature*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1919.

This is the companion volume to the present *History of American Literature*. It contains selections from the major writers of the four great geographical divisions of our country—New York, New England, the South, the West—with full notes, questions, and other helps for high-school class work.

13. ALDERMAN AND OTHERS, *Library of Southern Literature*, 16 vols., Martin and Hoyt, Atlanta, 1907-1913.

This set is particularly valuable for the study of Southern authors, major and minor. Many high schools in the South will probably have access to this set when they do not possess the Stedman and Hutchinson *Library of American Literature*. The selections are preceded in each case by an essay written by some one who is especially qualified to speak for the particular author. The Analytical Index and the Reading Courses in Volume XVI are valuable as suggestive guides in planning reading courses for high-school classes or literary clubs.

## I. COLONIAL PERIOD

(The page references following each topic are to the main treatment in the present volumes.)

### A. SOUTHERN COLONIES

1. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH (p. 3).

*Selections:* Cairns, 1-18; Trent and Wells, I, 1-22; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 3-17; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 1-6; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 1-8; Alderman and Others, X, 4829-4845; Bronson, 1-7.

Note the peculiar spelling, phraseology, etc., characteristic of the Elizabethan age in English literature. Determine for yourself whether Captain Smith seems to be telling the exact truth or whether he is dressing up his narrative to make it interesting to the English readers for whom he was writing. What seems to you to be the chief value of Smith's writings?

2. WILLIAM STRACHEY (p. 6).

*Selections:* Cairns, 19-26; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 24-31; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 6-9.

Pay particular attention to the vigorous description of the storm at sea. Read in this connection the description of the storm in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" (1610), and note any similarities of subject-matter or phraseology that you observe. A brief paper may be prepared on this. See the Variorum edition of "The Tempest" for suggestion.

3. THE BURWELL PAPERS (p. 8).

*Selections:* Cairns, 181-189; Trent and Wells, II, 156-169; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 450-462; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 51-56; Alderman and Others, XIV, 6418.

Read up on Bacon's Rebellion in your United States History, and then read the contemporary account found in the selections from "The Burwell Papers." Study particularly the two poetical epitaphs, one favorable and the other an unfavorable reply to the first, and determine which contains the better poetry.

4. WILLIAM BYRD (p. 9).

*Selections:* Cairns, 259-272; Trent and Wells, III, 21-43; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 302-309; Newcomer, Andrews and Hall, 79-91; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 79-82; Alderman and Others, II, 583-607; Bronson, 113-121.

Note particularly the rich descriptions and vigorous satiric references to the uncultured North Carolinians; and try to get some idea of the life of an early cavalier planter in Virginia. The bear story reprinted on page 11 of the present volume will give you an idea of Colonel Byrd's descriptive and narrative powers and his keen sense of the humorous. Find other passages of equal interest.

B. NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

I. PROSE

1. WILLIAM BRADFORD (p. 14).

*Selections:* Cairns, 27-43; Trent and Wells, II, 34-62 (also *Mouri's Relation*, pp. 63-69); Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 93-130; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 9-11; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 8-15 (also *Mouri's Relation*, pp. 15-18); Bronson, 7-17.

Read particularly the account of Morton's settlement at Merry Mount. In this connection read also Morton's account of "A Great Monster Supposed to be at Mare (Merry) Mount," Cairns, 67 ff., remembering that Captain Shrimpe is Morton's satirical designation for Captain Miles Standish. Finally read Hawthorne's "The Maypole of Merry Mount," in *Twice-Told Tales*, to see just how the later romancer used the historical material as the basis for an imaginary tale interpreting the spirit of the times and of the Puritans.

2. JOHN WINTHROP (p. 15).

*Selections:* Cairns, 44-59; Trent and Wells, I, 90-119; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 291-311; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 16-24; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 15-25; Bronson, 17-29.

The student will get a fairly good idea of life in the New England colonies by reading from Bradford, Winthrop, and Sewall. Of

particular interest will be Winthrop's and Bradford's account of Reverend John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians. Winthrop's letters to his wife Margaret, and her letters to him, are models of the early epistolary style and show an admirable example of marital love and respect. Read several of these. If possible, consult Twichell, *Some Old Puritan Love Letters* (Dodd Mead, 1893).

3. SAMUEL SEWALL (p. 17).

*Selections:* Cairns, 238-251; Trent and Wells, II, 286-326; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 188-200; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 74-79; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 66-74; Bronson, 89-105.

The account of Judge Sewall's courtship of Mrs. Winthrop is particularly amusing. Note the value of a private diary like this in presenting a realistic picture of the everyday life of the people. Sewall has been called "an American Pepys." Why?

4. COTTON MATHER (p. 24).

*Selections:* Cairns, 217-237; Trent and Wells II, 231-285; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 114-166; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 53-65; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 59-66; Bronson, 71-89.

Read especially the selections dealing with the witchcraft craze. It seems absurd to us that the best educated and most serious-minded men and women believed in witchcraft in these early days. But we must not be too severe in our condemnation of the chief actors in the delusion, for they were merely trying to carry out the will of God in persecuting those supposed to be under the domination and direction of the evil spirit. Compare Mather's attitude toward witches and witchcraft with that of Sewall and others.

5. JONATHAN EDWARDS (p. 26).

*Selections:* Cairns, 277-294; Trent and Wells, III, 143-189; Calhoun and MacAlarney 83-87; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 373-411; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 91-96; Bronson, 122-133.

The young reader will not care for much of Jonathan Edwards' philosophical work nor for very much of his long sermons. Read especially extracts from the sermon called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and also brief extracts from *The Freedom of the Will*. Try to interpret the spirit of Edwards rather than to expound his philosophy. Do you see why he may be called an early transcendentalist? Make a study of Holmes's "The Deacon's Masterpiece" with Edwards as the Deacon.



II. POETRY

1. THE BAY PSALM BOOK (p. 18).

*Selections:* Cairns, 73-81; Trent and Wells, I, 120-126; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 211-216; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 24-25; Bronson, 2-3.

Read the introductory statements given in the preface to *The Bay Psalm Book* for the general purposes and aims of the translators. Perhaps we are too ready to condemn the rough and uncouth metrical translations used by our Puritan forefathers in their religious services. It will be interesting to make a comparison of three or four of these Puritan Psalms with the parallel versions in the King James and the modern Oxford Bibles.

2. ANNE BRADSTREET (p. 19).

*Selections:* Cairns, 146-164; Trent and Wells, I, 271-287; Stedman and Hutchinson, I, 311-315; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 42-44; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 33-39; Bronson, 1-10; Boynton, 4-19.

Mrs. Bradstreet's best poem is "Contemplations." The student should read it entire, doing his best to appreciate the author's devout religious feeling, her pure and lofty ideals, and her keen appreciation of nature. Designated as the "Tenth Muse" by her contemporaries, she deserves our attention not only as the first woman poet of America, but as the first poet of importance, man or woman, in our literary history. Her rimed love-letters to her husband throw much light on her character and personality.

3. MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH (p. 20).

*Selections:* Cairns, 165-177; Trent and Wells, II, 47-60; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 3-19; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 44-99; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 47-51; Bronson, 19-28; Boynton, 18-23.

A little of Wigglesworth will suffice for most readers. Do you like the ballad meter with its internal rime in the odd-numbered lines? By way of contrast to the spirit of this rimed theology, read the rollicking drinking song by Thomas Morton in Trent and Wells, I, 72, or in Boynton, p. 11.

C. THE MIDDLE COLONIES

1. JOHN WOOLMAN (p. 31).

*Selections:* Cairns, 305-313; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 78-85; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 96-107; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 115-117; Bronson, 133-137.

Woolman is a quaint writer, and his *Journal* is worthy of close reading. It has been reprinted in complete form in several cheap editions, notably in the Macmillan Pocket Classics. Particularly interesting is Woolman's attitude toward the question of slavery. Note also his peculiar views on the use of dyes in clothing. What do you learn about the religious views of the Quakers from your study of Woolman?

2. THOMAS GODFREY (p. 32).

*Selections:* Cairns, 295-304; Bronson (*Poems*), 53-60; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 136-137; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 110-112.

Those interested in the drama should read "The Prince of Parthia" entire, as the earliest example of the American drama. It will be found in Quinn's *Representative American Plays*, 1-42; and in Volume I of *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*, edited by M. J. Moses, 21-108. Note particularly evidences of the influence of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists on Godfrey's style.

3. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (p. 33).

*Selections:* Cairns, 314-334; Trent and Wells, III, 190-236; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 148-176; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 107-134; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 92-110; Bronson, 148-176; Foerster, 1-37.

Every American boy and girl should read Franklin's *Autobiography* in some good annotated edition. *Selections from the Almanacs* and the shorter works by Franklin will be found in the references given above. Every member of the class should be required to write on or to discuss orally some phase of Franklin's life or character. See the essay subjects suggested on page 401, numbers 19-22.

## II. REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

### A. PROSE

1. PATRICK HENRY (p. 50).

*Selections:* Cairns, 335-342; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 214-218; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 120-123; Alderman and Others, VI, 2355-2374; Bronson, 197-200.

Study Patrick Henry as a typical Revolutionary orator. Every American boy and girl should know, by heart if possible, his "Speech on Liberty," sometimes called "The Alternative." It

has been reprinted in almost every reader, speaker, and book of prose selections published in America from the earliest days of the republic to the present. If available, Wirt's *Life and Character of Patrick Henry* should be read in this connection.

2. ALEXANDER HAMILTON (p. 53).

*Selections:* Cairns, 362-371; Stedman and Hutchinson, IV, 119-127; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 129-130; Bronson, 216-224.

Read two or three papers from *The Federalist*. This is an important book of essays in our political literature, but it is probably too heavy a type of reading for most high-school students. The entire series has been reprinted in convenient modern form in Everyman's Library (Dutton).

3. THOMAS JEFFERSON (p. 54).

*Selections:* Cairns, 353-361; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 265-289; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 125-128; Alderman and Others, VI, 2677-2717; Bronson, 205-208.

The Declaration of Independence is, of course, Jefferson's outstanding masterpiece in political prose, and every student will naturally be familiar with this. His inaugural addresses are also excellent state papers. Most students will doubtless be more interested in Jefferson's descriptions of such things as "The Natural Bridge," found in his *Notes on Virginia*, than in his state papers. A study of Jefferson's ideas on architecture, as exemplified in his home, Monticello, and in his plans for the buildings and grounds of the University of Virginia, will also be found to interest some students.

4. THOMAS PAINE (p. 60).

*Selections:* Cairns 343-352; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 219-236; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 156-160; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 130-134; Bronson, 202-205.

The student will be more interested in *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* than in Paine's later works. *The Right of Man* has been recently issued in Everyman's Library (Dutton).

5. ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR (p. 63).

*Selections:* Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 138-146; Bronson, 138-147.

Crèvecoeur has been heretofore little known, but his *Letters from an American Farmer* has proved to be such an interesting volume from every point of view that it is now ranked relatively high among the prose productions of the Revolutionary Period.

The complete text is now easily accessible in *Everyman's Library* (Dutton). See the selection given on pages 64 and 65 of this volume.

### B. POETRY

#### 1. REVOLUTIONARY BALLADS AND MINOR POEMS (p. 66).

*Selections:* Cairns, 449-465; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 338-361; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 134-136, 151-154; Bronson, 66-78; Boynton, 58-88.

Popular songs and ballads like "Yankee Doodle" will prove of great interest to the students. For fuller selections see *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution*, edited by Frank Moore; and *Poems of American History*, edited by B. E. Stevenson.

#### 2. JOHN TRUMBULL (p. 69).

*Selections:* Cairns, 395-408; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 403-413; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 141-151; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 141-145; Bronson, 87-105; Boynton, 43-57.

The selections from "McFingal" will be of most interest. "The Progress of Dulness" will also prove interesting as a satire on the educational system of the times.

#### 3. JOEL BARLOW (p. 73).

*Selections:* Cairns, 421-430; Stedman and Hutchinson, IV, 46-55; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 147-152; Bronson, 116-133; Boynton, 125-135.

Barlow may be taken as a typical epic poet of the period. A few selections from "The Columbiad" will show the style of the heroic couplets which he employed in his ambitious but unsuccessful epic. "The Hasty Pudding" is worth reading entire. If desirable, a broader study of "The Hartford Wits" (see p. 68 in this volume) may be made. Note particularly the influence of the English classical poets on the style of the American poets of this period.

#### 4. PHILIP FRENEAU (p. 75).

*Selections:* Cairns, 431-448; Stedman and Hutchinson, III, 445-457; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 175-185; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 135-141; Bronson, 133-155; Boynton, 89-117; Stedman, 3-8.

Freneau should be studied as a nature poet and as a satirist. He is particularly interesting as an interpreter of the American spirit of his times. If possible, read the biographical and critical essay by F. L. Patee in Volume I of the definitive edition of Freneau's works, 1902.

C. DRAMA AND FICTION

1. EARLY AMERICAN PLAYS (p. 79).

*Selections:* Royal Tyler's "The Contrast," in Quinn, 43-77; in Moses, I, 430-498; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 159-166; William Dunlap, "André," in Quinn, 79-108; in Moses, I, 499-564.

Until recently it has been difficult to obtain copies of the early plays, but with the publication of A. H. Quinn's *Representative American Plays* (Houghton Mifflin, 1916) and the first of the three volumes of *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*, edited by M. J. Moses (Dutton, 1918), an opportunity is given for the first-hand study of the early types of American drama. If desirable, Thomas Godfrey (see p. 390 above) may be included in this study.

2. EARLY AMERICAN NOVELS (p. 81).

Let some student read and report on *Charlotte Temple* or some other available example of the early American sentimental novel. If possible, *The Foresters*, by Jeremy Belknap, and *Modern Chivalry*, by H. H. Brackenridge, may also be assigned for special reports. Selections from the last-named may be found in Cairns, 466-474.

3. CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (p. 82).

*Selections:* Cairns, 475-493; Stedman and Hutchinson, IV, 265-292; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 191-198; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 167-176.

If available, one or more of Brown's novels should be read entire. His treatment of American Indians, the yellow-fever epidemics in Philadelphia, and his descriptions of the scenery about his native city will be of particular interest. Mr. John Erskine in his *Leading American Novelists* devotes a chapter to Brown.

III. ARTISTIC OR CREATIVE PERIOD  
(NINETEENTH CENTURY)

A. THE NEW YORK GROUP

1. WASHINGTON IRVING (p. 90).

*Selections:* Payne, 1-31; Stedman and Hutchinson, V, 41-83; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 198-245; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 186-225; Bronson, 224-279; Foerster, 38-94.

*The Sketch Book* should be read entire. Payne's *Selections* contains one typical essay, "Westminster Abbey," and one typical story, "Rip Van Winkle." After a close classroom study of these

or similar selections, the students should be required to complete the book and report on it as a whole. *The Alhambra* is another book that may be profitably read entire for outside reading or as a classroom text. *Tales of a Traveler* may be similarly treated. Most of the stories are entertaining, but those treating of the Italian banditti and the money-diggers (Parts III and IV) will probably be more attractive to young readers. A few chapters from the brilliant burlesque, *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, will be enough to illustrate this particular phase of Irving's humor. *Bracebridge Hall* along with certain sketches in the *Sketch Book* will reflect Irving's travels in England and his interest in English life. *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith* is a good example of the sympathetic type of biography written by one literary man of another; the influence of Goldsmith on Irving's prose style will make a good essay topic. *The Life of Washington* and *The Life of Columbus* are longer, but they will probably hold the interest of some students.

2. JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (p. 100).

*Selections:* Payne, 32-41; Stedman and Hutchinson, V, 138-183; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 245-277; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 225-238; Foerster, 95-130.

*The Spy* is a good story to read first, since it reflects the period of the American Revolution. Then the Leatherstocking Tales may be read in the chronological order — *The Deerslayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, *The Prairie*. For those who like sea tales *The Pilot*, *The Red Rover*, *The Two Admirals*, and *The Water Witch* will prove to be the most entertaining. If there is time for only a few of Cooper's books, the student should be encouraged to read at least three representative novels — *The Spy*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Pilot*. Subjects for essays on specific topics will readily suggest themselves.

3. WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (p. 110).

*Selections:* Payne, 42-49; Stedman and Hutchinson, V, 53-79; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 277-289; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 239-253; Bronson, 178-208; Page, 1-35; Boynton, 169-174; Stedman, 53-79.

After making a close classroom study of some of Bryant's shorter poems, the student should be encouraged to read Bryant's translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The influence of Wordsworth on Bryant will be for the more mature students a fruitful study in literary criticism.

4. WALT WHITMAN (p. 118).

*Selections:* Payne, 50-71; Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 501-513; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 748-774; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 573-584; Bronson, 443-475; Boynton, 473-541; Stedman, 221-232.

For the young reader Whitman is best in selections. His verse will present a new problem, but if the student will read Whitman's poems aloud, he will soon begin to note the regular rhythmic successions by which the poet makes his effects. Close classroom study of a few selections will prepare the student for more rapid reading of additional selections. If the student will cultivate a taste for Whitman's peculiar style, he will find the work of this poet to have a tonic and invigorating effect on him.

#### B. THE NEW ENGLAND GROUP

1. RALPH WALDO EMERSON (p. 157).

*Selections:* Payne, 72-108; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 128-166; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 400-444; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 316-352; Bronson (*Poems*), 309-327; Bronson (*Prose*), 345-406; Page, 58-101; Foerster, 300-327; Boynton, 195-223; Stedman, 90-101.

Emerson is somewhat difficult, but he is thoroughly worthwhile for the high-school student. Begin with a close classroom study of such essays as "Compensation," "Self-Reliance," "Heroism," and the like. An enthusiastic teacher can make Emersonians even of young readers, for Emerson is particularly attractive in his optimism, his independence, and his Americanism to all young minds. A few of the simpler poems may also be taken up for closer study. It will not be wise to force much outside reading in Emerson on immature and unwilling minds, which may thus become prejudiced against him.

2. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (p. 168).

*Selections:* Payne, 109-165; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 177-214; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 357-400; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 352-366; Bronson, 406-474; Foerster, 193-300.

Hawthorne is one of the greater prose writers for young readers. Beginning with his juvenile books, *The Wonder Book*, *Tanglewood Tales*, *Grandfather's Chair*, in the earlier grades, and following these with selected stories from *Twice-Told Tales*, *Mosses from*

an *Old Manse*, *The Snow Image*, and taking up finally the longer novels, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Marble Faun*, the student may find a progressive sequence of the most artistic fiction yet produced in America. To cultivate a taste for Hawthorne is to cultivate a taste for the very best of our prose stylists.

3. HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (p. 179)

*Selections:* Payne, 166-249; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 282-324; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 591-641; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 366-434; Bronson, 230-309; Page, 102-258; Boynton, 366-420; Stedman, 111-126.

Longfellow is perhaps the best poet to begin with if one desires to cultivate a taste for simple heart melodies. His shorter poems may be divided into song lyrics, ballads, sonnets, and personal or occasional poems. His longer narrative poems will demand special attention. After one or two of the longer poems have been studied in detail, the student should read others more rapidly, largely for the sake of the story in each. The anthologies usually contain fairly full selections from Longfellow, but the complete works of this poet, including the dramas and the translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, should be accessible to the high-school students. Those who are interested in American romantic prose may also read Longfellow's *Outre Mer*, *Hyperion*, and *Kavanaugh*.

4. JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (p. 192).

*Selections:* Payne, 250-278; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 353-389; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 559-591; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 435-480; Bronson, 328-375; Page, 259-354; Boynton, 239-274; Stedman, 128-142.

Whittier's early ballads, poems on slavery, songs of labor, personal and occasional poems, and longer narrative poems may be profitably studied in groups.

5. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (p. 200).

*Selections:* Payne, 279-298; Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 3-37; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 641-678; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 480-507; Bronson (*Poems*), 375-387; Bronson (*Prose*), 498-536; Foerster, 569-619; Page, 355-409; Boynton, 420-448; Stedman, 153-162.

The humor of Holmes will attract many casual readers, but unless some external stimulus is brought to bear upon high-school students, few of them will be able to make a serious study of this poet. The student should be taught to read the longer occasional



poems and to appreciate their quality. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* should be read entire, and the other volumes of the Breakfast Table series should be dipped into liberally. One or two of Holmes's "medicated novels" will also prove to be worth a careful perusal.

6. HENRY DAVID THOREAU (p. 208).

*Selections:* Payne, 299-311; Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 323-336; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 444-458; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 507-515; Bronson, 474-498; Foerster, 435-494.

*Walden* is a book to be read in selections by young readers, because it is as a whole too largely philosophical and too subtle for the steady perusal of young persons. The Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls will enjoy the narrative account of Thoreau's life in the woods, however, and they should be encouraged to read as much of Thoreau's nature description as they will. As far as possible let the students test the accuracy of Thoreau's observations.

7. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (p. 215).

*Selections:* Payne, 312-344; Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 411-448; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 678-717; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 515-573; Bronson (*Poems*), 387-436; Bronson (*Prose*), 536-589; Page, 410-531; Foerster, 495-568; Boynton, 275-316; Stedman, 202-218.

Lowell is equally important as poet and as essayist. His humorous dialect work in the *Biglow Papers*, First and Second Series, will interest some students, though these volumes will have to be read largely from the historic point of view. The longer literary essays will be found to be rather difficult reading for young readers, though some of these should be read. The passages from the "Fable for Critics" should be read as each of the important authors is taken up for classroom study. It is a good poem to read in extracts rather than entire.

### C. THE SOUTHERN GROUP

1. EDGAR ALLAN POE (p. 253).

*Selections:* Payne, 345-409; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 429-469; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 313-356; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 254-275; Alderman and Others, IX, 4083-4126; Bronson (*Poems*), 209-230; Bronson (*Prose*), 280-344; Page, 36-57; Foerster, 131-192; Boynton, 224-238; Stedman, 144-152.

Poe should be studied as poet, critic, and story-writer. His works hold a sort of perennial interest, particularly for young readers, and hence with very little encouragement high-school students may be induced to read deeply into both his prose and his poetry.

2. HENRY TIMROD (p. 265).

*Selections:* Payne, 410-417; Stedman and Hutchinson, VIII, 408-411; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 821-825; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 595-597; Alderman and Others, XII, 5391-4515; Bronson, 488-493; Boynton, 342-355; Stedman, 314-317.

This Southern poet deserves more attention than he is usually given in the study of American poetry. The fullest selections are found in Professor Boynton's *American Poetry*. Timrod's complete poems are now published by Houghton Mifflin and Company.

3. PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (p. 271).

*Selections:* Payne, 418-420; Stedman and Hutchinson, VIII, 461-466; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 825-830; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 598-600; Alderman and Others, V, 2265-2297; Bronson, 494-496; Boynton, 356-365; Stedman, 317-320.

Hayne and Timrod are both good sonneteers. The student may make a special study of Hayne's sonnets, or his longer odes, or his narrative poems. Hayne lived longer than most of the other Southern poets, and his work represents in good average verse much of the charm of Southern life and scene. A special paper might be written on the correspondence of Hayne and Lanier, and another on the relationship between Timrod and Hayne.

4. SIDNEY LANIER (p. 274).

*Selections:* Payne, 421-427; Stedman and Hutchinson, X, 145-151; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 830-844; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 584-590; Alderman and Others, VII, 3041-3077; Bronson, 525-533; Page, 611-632; Boynton, 449-472; Stedman, 433-440.

Lanier should be studied closely for the musical effects of his verse. His letters and his work on *The Science of English Verse* will be suggestive and elucidating on this point. Stedman groups Lanier along with seven other major American poets, and Page includes him with full selections in his *Chief American Poets*. His poetry is highly artistic, but it will be difficult for those who have little taste for the finer musical modulations of poetry.

D. THE WESTERN GROUP

1. MARK TWAIN (p. 320).

*Selections:* Payne, 451-457; Stedman and Hutchinson, IX, 290-307.

Mark Twain is not easily accessible in books of selections. He believed that an author should be granted a perpetual copyright on the product of his own brain, and his publishers and heirs have not as yet in any large way consented for Mark Twain's works to be reprinted in anthologies. However, complete special volumes are easily accessible. Every young American reads *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* at the first fair opportunity. *The Prince and the Pauper* is another favorite with young readers. Some of the longer humorous books, such as *Innocents Abroad* and *Roughing It*, will hold high-school students throughout. Mark Twain's short stories are also good reading, and his humorous essays and orations are delightful.

2. BRET HARTE (p. 331).

*Selections:* Payne, 458-471; Stedman and Hutchinson, X, 3-22; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 601; Stedman, 403-407.

Bret Harte's better poems and short stories are easily accessible in a volume in the Riverside Literature Series (Houghton Mifflin). The student should read several of the stories and several of the poems in addition to what is found in the anthologies.

3. JOAQUIN MILLER (p. 335).

*Selections:* Payne, 472-476; Stedman and Hutchinson, X, 80-85; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 618-621; Boynton, 555-567; Stedman, 426-430.

"The Poet of the Sierras" is still somewhat inaccessible to the general reader. No single volume of his best verse has yet been published. His heroic poems and his portrayal of western mountain scenery are well worth studying.

4. JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (p. 340).

*Selections:* Payne, 481-485; Stedman and Hutchinson, XI, 130-136; Calhoun and MacAlarney, 627-629; Stedman, 559-564.

Riley is perhaps the most popular poet we have had since Longfellow, and there will be little trouble in getting high-school students to read his works rather fully. Suggested groupings for special study are Riley's dialect verse, his child poems, his humorous verse, his serious and pathetic poems, etc.

5. WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY (p. 344).

*Selections:* Payne, 486-488; Boynton, 577-589; Stedman, 726-727.

Moody is somewhat difficult for most high-school readers, but his poetry will be found to be stimulating to the more advanced students. His acting plays, "The Great Divide" and "The Faith Healer," will be easier reading than the poetic dramas, such as "The Fire Bringer" and "The Masque of Judgment." The poem on "The Death of Eve" will be attractive to some students.

## SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

### I. COLONIAL PERIOD

1. Peculiar Words and Phrases in the Early Colonial Writings
2. What I Learned about Indians from the Readings in Colonial Literature
3. Captain John Smith as a Typical Colonial Leader
4. An Imaginary Account of a Trip with Captain Smith
5. The Story of Pocahontas
6. The Career of Nathaniel Bacon (see the "Burwell Papers")
7. A Trip through Virginia and North Carolina with Colonel William Byrd
8. Life in the Southern Colonies (see particularly the writings of Colonel William Byrd)
9. The Chief Source Books on Colonial History in New England
10. An Early Colonial Courtship (consult Sewall's *Diary*)
11. A Woman's Trip on Horseback from Boston to New York in 1704 (see Sarah Kemble Knight in Trent and Wells, II, 327; Bronson [*Prose*] 105; Newcomer, Andrews, and Hall, 65; Stedman and Hutchinson, II, 248)
12. Ideals of the Puritans as Revealed in Their Writings
13. The Settlement at Merrymount (see Bradford, Morton, etc.)
14. The Witchcraft Craze in Early New England Literature
15. The Life and Times of Jonathan Edwards
16. Our First Woman Poet
17. "The Day of Doom" as an Interpretation of Puritanism
18. Why I Like John Woolman's *Journal*
19. The Many-sided Franklin
20. Lessons Learned from Franklin's Autobiography
21. Franklin's Proverbs
22. "Poor Richard": A Character Sketch
23. A Book Review: Some Novel Dealing with Colonial Times (see pp. 42-43 of this volume)

### II. REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

1. The General Characteristics of Revolutionary Literature
2. Patrick Henry as a Typical Revolutionary Orator
3. Our First Tragedy: "The Prince of Parthia," by Thomas Godfrey

4. The American Spirit in Our Early Drama (see Tyler's "The Contrast," Dunlap's "André," etc., in Quinn or Moses)
5. "Jonathan," the First Stage Yankee (see "The Contrast")
6. Literary Qualities of Washington's "Farewell Address"
7. Washington's and Jefferson's Attitude toward "Entangling Alliances"; or From Washington to Wilson in World Policies
8. Jefferson as "The Father of the University of Virginia"
9. A Visit to Mount Vernon
10. A Visit to Monticello
11. Early American Farm Life (see Crèvecoeur)
12. A Book Review: One of Charles Brockden Brown's Novels
13. The Nature Poems of Philip Freneau
14. Francis Hopkinson and "The Battle of the Kegs"
15. Our Early National Songs, "Yankee Doodle" etc.
16. Domestic Life in Revolutionary Times (see the Biographies of Martha Washington, Mercy Warren, etc.)
17. A Book Review: Some Novel Dealing with Revolutionary Times (see pp. 86-87)

### III. THE ARTISTIC OR CREATIVE PERIOD (NINETEENTH CENTURY)

#### A. THE NEW YORK GROUP

1. Variety and Range of Subject-Matter and Style in Irving's *The Sketch Book*
2. Irving's Humor
3. Sentiment and Pathos in *The Sketch Book*
4. Irving's Creation of Fictitious Characters
5. Irving as a Biographer
6. The Influence of Addison on Irving
7. Ichabod Crane: A Character Sketch
8. Cooper's Indians
9. Cooper's Portrayal of Pioneer Life
10. Faults of Cooper's Style
11. Harvey Birch, the Spy
12. Natty Bumppo: A Character Sketch
13. Long Tom Coffin: A Character Sketch
14. Bryant's Nature Poems
15. Bryant as a Journalist
16. Bryant's Translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
17. Walt Whitman as the Poet of Democracy
18. Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln

19. The Peculiarities of Walt Whitman's Style
20. Walt Whitman as a Hospital Nurse during the Civil War
21. Walt Whitman and the Recent Writers of Free Verse
22. My Favorite Minor Poet of the New York Group

B. THE NEW ENGLAND GROUP

1. Wisdom from Emerson: My Favorite Quotations and Why I Like Them
2. Emerson's Doctrine of Self-Reliance and Independence
3. Applications of the Law of Compensation in My Own Life
4. Emerson's Teachings on Nature in Prose and Verse
5. Emerson's Prose Style
6. Emerson's Attitude toward Books
7. Emerson as a Lecturer
8. Concord and Its Literary Associations
9. Emerson's Method of Composition
10. My Favorites among Hawthorne's Short Stories
11. A Visit to the Old Manse and Concord Bridge
12. Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
13. Hawthorne's Use of Symbolism and Allegory
14. The Reflection of Puritanism in Hawthorne's Tales
15. Hawthorne's Connection with the Transcendental Movement
16. Hawthorne's Method of Making Notes for His Stories
17. Poe and Hawthorne as Writers of the Short Story
18. Why Longfellow is Our Most Popular Poet
19. Longfellow and the Children
20. Influence of Longfellow's Foreign Travel on His Poetry
21. Longfellow's "Evangeline" and Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea."
22. Longfellow's Use of Indian Legends
23. A Defense of Longfellow against the Attacks of Certain Modern Critics
24. Craigie House: Longfellow's Home
25. Whittier as the Poet Laureate of New England
26. What I Like and What I Dislike in Whittier's Anti-Slavery Poetry
27. Whittier's Poems Classified
28. A Comparison of Whittier's "The Tent on the Beach" with Longfellow's "The Wayside Inn"
29. A Comparison of Whittier's "Snow-Bound" with Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night"

30. Descriptions of Snow in American Poetry (see Whittier, Emerson, Bryant, Lowell, Frost, etc.)
31. Whittier and the Abolition Movement
32. Holmes's Poems Classified
33. The Humor of Holmes
34. Famous Class Poems by Holmes
35. Holmes as a Talker
36. The Peculiar Advantages of the Plan of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*
37. The Influence of Holmes's Scientific Studies on His Literary Productions
38. Lowell as a Representative Literary Man
39. Lowell's Personal Poems
40. Lowell's Americanism
41. Lowell as a Critic
42. The Moral and Didactic Element in Lowell's Poetry

#### C. THE SOUTHERN GROUP

1. Poe's Character
2. The Qualities of Poe's Poetry
3. Poe's Stories Classified
4. Why I Like Poe's Stories
5. Poe's Detective Stories and Their Influence
6. Poe's Place in American Criticism
7. Poe's Theory of Poetry
8. Poe and the Development of the Short Story
9. Poe's Use of the Supernatural
10. The Sad Story of Timrod's Life
11. Timrod's War Poems
12. The Life Story of Paul Hamilton Hayne
13. Southern Life and Scenery in Hayne's Poetry
14. Hayne's Treatment of Nature
15. Hayne as Editor of *Russell's Magazine*
16. The Charleston Coterie of Writers
17. A Study of Hayne's Sonnets
18. Letters of Two Poets, Hayne and Lanier
19. Sidney Lanier's Marsh Hymns
20. Musical Effects in Lanier's Poems
21. The Spiritual and Moral Element in Lanier's Poetry
22. Lanier as a Letter Writer
23. Lanier's Love Poems



D. THE WESTERN GROUP

1. Mark Twain as a Typical American
2. The Funniest Things Mark Twain Ever Said
3. Tom Sawyer, a Typical American Boy
4. Why Huck Finn Is a Great Character Creation
5. Mark Twain's Descriptions of Life on the Mississippi River
6. The Humor of *Innocents Abroad*
7. The Humor of *Roughing It*
8. Mark Twain as a Public Entertainer
9. Realism in Mark Twain's Stories
10. Bret Harte and the Local-Color Story
11. Bret Harte's Poems
12. Joaquin Miller, "The Poet of the Sierras"
13. Eugene Field, the Poet Laureate of Childhood
14. Riley's Dialect Poems
15. Riley's Humor and Pathos
16. My Favorite Riley Poems
17. William Vaughn Moody's Poems
18. William Vaughn Moody as a Dramatist
19. My Favorite Western Poet
20. A Book Review: Some Novel Dealing with Western Life



## THE INDEX

(*Titles appear in italic. Bold-face figures indicate the main treatment of the subject.*)

- Abolition, 149, 151, **155**, 197, 198,  
218, 240, 248  
Adams, John, 48, 51, **52**  
Adams, Samuel, 46, 47, 48, **51**, 62  
*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*,  
The, 322, 327, 329  
Aiken, Conrad Potter, 290  
Alcott, Amos Bronson, 152, 153,  
154, 239  
Alcott, Louisa May, 239  
Alden, John and Priscilla, 112,  
187, 189  
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 229,  
**230 f.**, 239  
*Alhambra*, The, 96  
Allen, James Lane, 291, **303 f.**  
Almanacs, 13; Franklin's, 35, **38 ff.**  
Americanism, spirit of, 316 f.  
*American Scholar*, The, 162  
Annalists, New England, 14 ff.  
Arnold, Matthew, 111  
Articles of Confederation, 47  
Atherton, Gertrude, 370  
*Autobiography*, Franklin's, 30, 35,  
38, **40**, 85, 88  
*Autobiography*, Jefferson's, 59  
*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*,  
The, 202, **206 f.**
- Bacheller, Irving, 148  
Ballads, Revolutionary, 66 ff.  
Bancroft, George, 172, 225, **227**,  
228  
Bangs, Edward, 66  
*Barbara Frietchie*, 198  
Barlow, Joel, 69, **73 ff.**; suggested  
reading, 392  
Baskerville, W. M., quoted, 302  
*Battlefield*, The, extract, 116  
*Battle Hymn of the Republic*, 232  
*Battle of the Kegs*, 67; extract, 68  
*Bay Psalm Book*, The, 13, 18 f.;  
extract, 19, 389  
Belknap, Jeremy, 82  
*Ben Hur*, a Tale of the Christ,  
363 f.
- Beverly, Robert, 9  
Bibliographies, 40, 85, 375, 384  
*Bitter-Sweet*, extract, 231  
*Bliithedale Romance*, The, 154, 177  
Boker, George H., 139  
Boone, Daniel, 313, 316, 368  
Boston as a literary center, 88, 89  
Brackenridge, Hugh Henry, 75,  
79, 82  
Bradford, Governor William, **14 f.**,  
16; suggested reading, 387  
Bradstreet, Anne, 14, **19 f.**; sug-  
gested reading, 389  
Branch, Anna Hempstead, 233  
Breitman, Hans, 139  
Brook Farm, 140, **154 f.**, 174, 177  
Brown, Alice, 239, 242  
Brown, Charles Brockden, 45,  
**82 ff.**, 88, 90; education of, 82;  
early works of, 82 ff.; last days  
of, 84 f.; tales of, 84; *Wieland*,  
83 f.; suggested reading, 393  
Bryant, William Cullen, 90, 107,  
**110 ff.**, 220; "American Words-  
worth, The," 110; as an editor,  
114; best poems of, 114 ff.;  
death and burial of, 116 f.;  
estimate of, 117; portrait of, 111;  
precocity of, 112 f.; young man-  
hood of, 113; visits to Europe,  
114; suggested reading, 394  
*Building of the Ship*, The, 184;  
extract, 185  
Bunner, Henry Cuyler, 148  
Burdette, Robert J., 342  
Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 296  
Burroughs, John, 140, **141 f.**;  
portrait of, 143  
*Burwell Papers*, 8, 386  
Butler, Samuel, 70  
Bynner, Witter, 139  
Byrd, Colonel William, **9 ff.**, 88;  
home of, 10; suggested reading,  
387  
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 105,  
152, 220, 261

- Cable, George Washington, 250,  
291, 301 f., 342  
Calhoun, John Caldwell, 252 f.  
*California and Oregon Trails, The*,  
227  
*Call of the Bugles, The*, extract, 137  
Canfield, Dorothy, 370  
Carleton, Will, 352  
Carlyle, Thomas, 23, 121, 211, 229  
Carpenter, George Rice, quoted,  
199  
Cary, Alice and Phoebe, 139  
Catherwood, Mary Hartwell,  
369 f.  
Cawein, Madison, 286, 288 f.  
*Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches, The*, 323, 325  
*Chambered Nautilus, The*, 204  
Channing, William Ellery, 150 f.,  
154, 208, 210, 212  
Charleston as a literary center,  
247  
Cheney, John Vance, 352  
*Chicago*, quoted, 359 f.  
*Christmas Night in the Quarters*,  
288  
Chronological Charts, 378 ff.  
Churchill, Winston, 363, 367 ff.  
*Circuit Rider, a Tale of the Heroic Age, The*, 365  
Civil War, minor southern poets  
of the, 283 ff.  
*Clari, or The Maid of Milan*, 138  
Clark, George Rogers, 313, 316  
Clark, William, 313, 316  
Clay, Henry, 252  
Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *See*  
Twain, Mark  
Colonial literature, 1 ff.; back-  
ground of, 1 ff.; of Middle Colo-  
nies, 30 ff.; of New England  
Colonies, 12 ff.; of Southern  
Colonies, 3 ff.  
*Columbia*, extract, 73  
*Commemoration Ode*, 221  
Concord, 140, 158, 165, 167, 174,  
177, 178, 209, 210, 212, 213, 216  
*Concord Hymn*, 160  
*Connecticut Yankee in King  
Arthur's Court, A*, 329  
*Conquest of Mexico*, 225, 226, 363  
*Conquest of Peru, The*, 226  
*Contemplations*, 13; extract, 20  
*Contrast, The*, 80  
Cooke, John Esten, 283, 290,  
293 f.  
Cooke, Philip Pendleton, 283, 293  
Cooke, Rose Terry, 241  
Cooper, James Fenimore, 84, 85;  
89, 100 ff., 145, 220, 293; "Amer-  
ican Scott, The," 100, 102;  
decline of popularity, 108 f.;  
estimate of, 102; in the navy,  
103 f.; *Last of the Mohicans, The*,  
107; *Leatherstocking Tales, The*,  
107 f.; monument to, 110; portrait of,  
101; *Sea Tales*, 105 f.; *Spy, The*, 105;  
success of, 106 f.; youth and  
education of, 102 f.; suggested  
reading, 394  
Copse Hill, 270, 272  
*Cornhuskers*, 360  
*Cotton Boll, The*, 269  
*Courtin', The*, 220  
Craddock, Charles Egbert, 291,  
302, 303  
*Craigie House*, Longfellow's home,  
182, 215  
Crane, Stephen, 145, 147 f.  
Crawford, F. Marion, 145, 146 f.  
Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de,  
63 ff.; suggested reading, 391  
*Crisis, The* (Churchill), 368  
*Crisis, The* (Paine), extract, 62  
*Crossing, The*, 368  
Crothers, Dr. Samuel McChord,  
228 f.  
Curtis, George William, 140 f.  
*Daguerreotype, The*, 346  
Dana, Richard Henry, Jr., 239,  
240  
*Dance, The*, extract, 67  
Davis, Richard Harding, 148  
*Day of Doom, The*, 13, 33; extract,  
21 f.  
*Deacon's Masterpiece, The*, 28, 29,  
205  
*Death of the Flowers*, extract, 115  
*Declaration of Independence, The*,  
37, 56, 58, 67  
Dennie, Joseph, 80 f.

- Description of New England, A*, 4  
*Dial, The*, 153 f.  
 Diary, Sewall's, 17  
 Dickinson, Emily, 232  
 Dickinson, John, 53, 66, 88  
*Divina Commedia*, Longfellow's translation of, 116, 188  
 Drama, beginnings of, in America, 32 f.; in Revolutionary period, 79; suggested reading in, 393  
 Dromgoole, Will Allen, 303  
*Drum Taps*, 124  
 Dunlap, William, 80, 85  
  
*Edgar Huntly, or The Adventures of a Sleep-Walker*, 84  
 Edwards, Jonathan, 26 ff., 33, 38, 72, 88; education of, 26; marriage of, 27 f.; ministerial work, 26 f.; writings of, 27 ff.; suggested reading, 388  
 Eggleston, Edward, 363, 364 f.  
 Elliott, Sarah Barnwell, 302 f.  
*Elsie Venner*, 207  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 126, 140, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157 ff., 174, 177, 200, 208, 210, 214, 216, 220, 229; "American Scholar, The," 160 f.; as an essayist, 157, 162 f.; as a poet, 164 f.; "Concord Hymn," 160; early life of, 157 f.; his first book, 160; his other prose volumes, 163 f.; Holmes's estimate of, 164; home of, 163; last days of, 167 f.; lectures of, 158 f.; portrait of, 159; prose style of, 164; suggested reading, 395  
*Emily Sparks*, quoted, 358  
 English, Thomas Dunn, 138  
 Epitaph: of Richard Mather, 23; of Thomas Jefferson, 54  
*Epitaph on Nathaniel Bacon*, 8  
*Essays*, Emerson's, 162 f.  
 Essays, suggested subjects for, 401 ff.  
*Ethnogenesis*, 268  
*Evangeline*, 185 ff.  
 Everett, Edward, 156  
  
*Fable for Critics, A*, 117, 219; extract, 220  
  
*Fall of the House of Usher, The*, 264 f.  
*Farewell Address*, Washington's, 59 f.  
*Father Abraham's Speech*, extract, 39 f.  
*Federalist, The*, 54  
 Fiction, of the New England group, 239 ff.; of the New York group, 145 ff.; of the Revolutionary period, 81 ff.; of the Southern group, 290 ff.; of the Western group, 362 ff.; suggested reading in, 393  
 Field, Eugene, 320, 338 ff., 342; portrait of, 339  
 Filsinger, Mrs. Ernst B. *See* Teasdale, Sara  
 Fisher, Mrs. J. R. *See* Canfield, Dorothy  
 Fiske, John, 225, 227, 228  
 Fletcher, John Gould, 348, 362  
*Flute and Violin and Other Kentucky Tales and Romances*, 303  
 Foote, Mary Hallock, 370  
 Ford, Paul Leicester, 148  
 Foster, Hannah, 81  
 Foster, Stephen C., 138  
 Fox, John, Jr., 291, 304  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 30, 33 ff., 60, 62, 85; *Autobiography*, 40, 85, 88; early life of, 33 ff.; his services to the government, 37 f.; later attainments of, 35 f.; philosophy of, 38 ff.; suggested reading, 390  
 Frederic, Harold, 148  
*Freedom of the Will*, 27, 28 f.  
 Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins, 239, 241, 242  
 Free-Verse, 122, 233, 236, 237, 355 f.; 359 f.  
 French, Alice, 370  
 Freneau, Philip, 45, 75 ff., 79, 85, 88; as editor and poet, 75 f.; education and early works of, 75; estimate of, 78; nature lyrics of, 77 ff.; suggested reading, 392  
 Frost, Robert, 234, 235  
 Fuller, Henry Blake, 370  
 Fuller, Margaret, 152, 154, 177

- Galloway, Joseph, 52  
 Garland, Hamlin, 363, 365 f.  
 Garrison, William Lloyd, 156, 196  
*General Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles, The*, 4; extract, 6  
*Gettysburg National Cemetery, Address at the Dedication of*, 318  
*Gift, The*, quoted, 238  
 Gilder, Richard Watson, 139  
 Glasgow, Ellen, 291, 296  
 Godfrey, Thomas, 32 f., 79; suggested reading, 390  
 Grady, Henry Woodfin, 253  
 "Great Debate, The," 253
- Hale, Edward Everett, 239, 241  
*Hale in the Bush*, extract, 67  
 Hamilton, Alexander, 47, 48, 53 f., 60, 76, 88, 370; suggested reading, 391  
 Hamilton, William, 272  
 Harris, Joel Chandler, 250, 251, 287, 288, 291, 297 ff., 344; estimate of, 297; portrait of, 299; preparation of, 297 f.; stories of, 298, 300 f.  
 Harrison, Henry Sydnor, 291, 296  
 Harte, Francis Bret, 312, 317, 320, 324, 331 ff., 362; education of, 331 f.; connection of, with *The Atlantic Monthly*, 334; place of, in literature, 334 f.; portrait of, 333; stories of, 332, 334; suggested reading, 399  
 Hartford Wits, 68 ff.  
*Hasty Pudding, The*, extract, 74 f.  
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 16, 85, 154, 156, 157, 158, 167, 168 ff., 180, 203, 210, 220, 239, 260, 262, 304, 312, 325; *Bliithedale Romance, The*, 177; estimate of, 178 f.; *House of the Seven Gables, The*, 175 f.; juvenile books of, 176 f.; later works of, 178; life of, abroad, 177 f.; life of, in the "Old Manse," 172, 174; portrait of, 169; *Scarlet Letter, The*, 174 f.; tales and sketches, 170 ff.; youth and education of, 168, 170; suggested reading, 395  
 Hay, John, 348 ff.
- Hayne, Paul Hamilton, 247, 250, 266, 270, 271 ff., 274, 286, 292; Civil War experiences of, 271 f.; editorial work of, 271; life of, at "Copse Hill," 272; portrait of, 273; value of work of, 272, 274; suggested reading, 398  
 Hayne, Robert Young, 252 f., 271  
 Hegan, Alice. *See* Rice, Alice Hegan  
 Henry, O., 145, 250, 251, 305 ff., 373; as a journalist, 306, 308; best stories of, 309 f.; birth and early life of, 305 f.; career of, as a writer, 308 f.; final summary of, 311 f.; humor of, 310 f.; in Texas, 306; portrait of, 307  
 Henry, Patrick, 46, 48, 49, 50 f., 88, 251, 252; suggested reading, 390  
*Hermilage, The*, 350; extract, 351  
 Herrick, Robert, 371  
*Hiawatha*, 187  
*History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker, A*, 30, 93 f.  
*History of Plymouth Plantation, The*, 14 f.  
*History of the Conquest of Mexico. See Conquest of Mexico*  
*History of the Dividing Line Run in 1728*, 9, 10; extract, 11  
 Holland, Josiah Gilbert, 230, 231 f.  
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 28, 156, 157, 160, 162, 164, 200 ff., 216, 220, 229, 344; ancestry of, 202 f.; as an essayist, 200, 202; as a scientific man, 203 f.; biographies of, 207 f.; Breakfast Table Series, *The*, 206 f.; education of, 203; home life of, 204; humorous verse of, 205; lyrics of, 204; novels of, 207; portrait of, 201; trip to Europe, 208; suggested reading, 396  
 Hopkinson, Francis, 67 f.  
*Horse-shoe Robinson; or, A Tale of the Tory Ascendency*, 291  
*House of the Seven Gables, The*, 175 f.  
 Howe, Julia Ward, 232  
 Howells, William Dean, 206, 239, 242 ff., 288, 344, 351

- Huckleberry Finn*. See *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- I have a Rendezvous with Death*, 140
- Ik Marvel. See Mitchell, Donald Grant
- Imagists, 236 ff., 362
- Innocents Abroad, The*, 325 f., 327
- In Ole Virginia*, 295
- Irradiations*, quoted, 362
- Irving, Washington, 30, 80, 88, 90 ff., 105, 145, 171, 182, 200, 220, 262, 312, 325; biographies by, 98, 100; early life and education of, 90 ff.; essays of, 96 f.; "Father of American Literature," 90; his trips abroad, 92 f., 94 ff., 100; home of, 98 ff.; *Knickerbocker's History*, 93 f.; longer narratives of, 97 f.; portrait of, 91; suggested reading, 393
- Jackson, Helen Hunt, 369
- James, Henry, Jr., 239, 242, 244 ff.
- James, William, 244
- Jay, John, 54
- Jefferson, Joseph, 95
- Jefferson, Thomas, 44, 48, 54 ff., 76, 88, 114, 248, 251, 313; *Autobiography*, 59; characteristics and life of, 54, 56; portrait of, 57; state papers of, 56, 58; suggested reading, 391
- Jewett, Sarah Orne, 329, 241 f.
- Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle*, 349; extract, 350
- Johnston, Mary, 291, 295
- Johnston, Richard Malcolm, 291, 296 f.
- Jones, Howard Mumford, 352 f.
- Journal of John Winthrop, The*, extract, 15 f.
- Journal*, Woolman's, 30, 31; extract, 32
- Journals*, Emerson's, 163 f.
- Katie*, 269
- Kennedy, John Pendleton, 250, 290, 291 f.
- Key, Francis Scott, 282
- Kilmer, Joyce, 139 f.
- King, Grace, 291, 301
- Knickerbocker's History of New York*. See *History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker*
- Knickerbocker School, 88, 89, 94
- Lamar, L. Q. C., 253
- Lanier, Sidney, 250, 265, 274 ff., 286, 289, 344; early life of, 274 ff.; as a lawyer, 277 f.; as a musician, 276, 278, 280; call of, to write, 276 f.; home of, 279; last days of, 282; lectures of, on literature, 280 f.; portrait of, 275; poems of, 280, 281 f.; prose of, 281; suggested reading, 398
- Larcom, Lucy, 232
- Last Leaf, The*, 204
- Last of the Mohicans, The*, 107 f.
- Laurens, Henry, 251
- Lazarus, Emma, 139
- Leatherstocking Tales, 104, 106, 107 f.
- Leaves of Grass*, 121 ff., 356
- Lee, Gerald Stanley, 228, 229
- Lee, Richard Henry, 251
- Lee, Robert Edward, 248 f.
- Leland, Charles Godfrey, 139
- Leonard, Daniel, 52
- Letters from an American Farmer, The*, 63 ff.; extract, 64, 66
- Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, 53
- Life*, quoted, 351
- Life and Song*, 274
- Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, 98
- Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, The*, 207 f.
- Life of Washington*, 91, 98, 100
- Lincoln, Abraham, 125, 221, 242, 318, 319, 320, 365
- Lindsay, Nicholas Vachel, 348, 360 f.
- London, Jack, 371
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 157, 167, 179 ff., 199, 222, 225, 344; answer to critics of, 190, 192; as a professor at Harvard, 182; as a teacher at Bowdoin,

Longfellow (*continued*):

180; death of, 190; dramatic works of, 188; early poems of, 184; estimate of, 190; European travel of, 180 ff., 188 ff.; great narrative poems of, 184 ff.; his translation of Dante, 188; portrait of, 181; youth and education of, 180; suggested reading, 396

Longstreet, Judge Augustus Baldwin, 297

Lovett, Robert M., 346

Lowell, Amy, 234, 235 ff.; portrait, 236

Lowell, James Russell, 117, 122, 156, 162, 182, 198, 205, 215 ff., 344; ancestry of, 215; *annus mirabilis* of, 219 f.; as teacher and talker, 222; education of, 216; essays and addresses of, 222 ff.; *Fable for Critics*, A, 220; growth of fame of, 218 f.; home of, 223; last years, 224; portrait of, 217; representative man of letters, 215; *Vision of Sir Launfal*, The, 220 f.; suggested reading, 397

Mabie, Hamilton Wright, 142

Mackaye, Percy, 139

Madison, James, 54, 60, 75, 251

*Magnalia Christi Americana*, 25

Malone, Judge Walter, 289

Manly, John M., 346 f., 348

*Man with the Hoe*, The, 352; quoted, 353 f.

*Marble Faun*, The, 177 f.

Markham, Edwin, 352, 353 f.

Marshall, John, 251

*Marshes of Glynn*, The, 281

Martin, George Madden, 304 f.

Masters, Edgar Lee, 234, 348, 354 ff.; portrait of, 355

Mather, Cotton, 23, 24 ff., 88; suggested reading, 388

Mather, Increase, 23 f.

Mather, Richard, 18, 23

*McFingal*, 70; extract, 71 f.

Meek, Alexander Beaufort, 283

*Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft*, 25

Middle Atlantic States, nineteenth-century literature of, 89-148

Miller, Joaquin, 317, 320, 335 ff.; cabin and lodge of, 338; estimate of, 338; portrait of, 337; visits England, 336, 338; wanderings of, 335 f.; suggested reading, 399

Mitchell, Donald G., 239, 240 f.

Mitchell, Silas Weir, 145 f.

Monroe, Harriet, 356

Moody, William Vaughn, 320, 344 ff.; acting plays of, 347; as teacher and poet, 345 f.; education of, 344 f.; estimate of, 344, 348; poetic dramas of, 347; portrait of, 345; suggested reading, 400

More, Paul Elmer, 144, 168

Morris, George Pope, 138

Morton, Sarah, 81

Morton, Thomas, 16 f.

Motley, John Lothrop, 225, 226 f., 228

Muir, John, 317; portrait of, 143

Murfree, Mary Noailles. *See* Craddock, Charles Egbert  
*My Springs*, 277

*Nathan Hale*, extract, 67

New England, annalists and historians of, 14 ff.; colonial literature of, 12 ff.; early poets of, 18 ff.; nineteenth-century literature of, 89, 149 ff.; theologians of, 22 ff., 88

*New England Canaan*, The, 16 f.

"New Poetry," 230, 234 ff., 348 ff.

*New South*, The, 253

Norris, Frank, 317, 363, 366 f.

Norris, Kathleen, 370

*Notes on Virginia*, 58 f.

Novel. *See* Fiction

Nye, Bill, 342

*Odyssey*, Bryant's translation of, 116

O'Hara, Theodore, 283

Optimism, spirit of in Western literature, 319

Orators of the Civil War, 155 f., 251 ff.; of the Revolution, 48 ff.



- Ossoli, Margaret Fuller. *See* Fuller, Margaret
- Otis, James, 48, 49 f., 88
- Outside Reading, suggestions for, 382 ff.
- Overland Monthly, The*, 320, 332
- Over the Teacups*, 206
- Page, Thomas Nelson, 250, 287, 291, 295
- Paine, Thomas, 60 ff., 88; suggested reading, 391
- Pamphlets, 17 f., 44, 49, 52, 53, 62, 63, 82
- Parker, Theodore, 154, 156
- Parkman, Francis, 227 f.
- Parsons, Thomas William, 233
- Pathfinder, The*, 108
- Paulding, James K., 93
- Payne, John Howard, 138
- Peabody, Josephine Preston, 139
- Peck, Samuel Minturn, 289
- Penn, William, 30
- Percy, William Alexander, 290
- Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, 330
- Phillips, Wendell, 156
- Philosophy of Composition, The*, 260 f.
- Piatt, John James, 242, 351
- Pierce, Franklin, 170, 177, 178
- Pike, Albert, 283 f.
- Pike County Ballads*, 348, 349
- Pilot, The*, 104, 106
- Pinckney, Charles, 251
- Pinkney, Edward Coate, 283
- Pinkney, William, 251
- Pioneers, The*, 106, 107, 108
- Poe, Edgar Allan, 84, 171, 220, 237, 248, 250, 253 ff., 282, 290, 291, 311, 312, 342; birth of, 254; classification of works of, 260, 262 f.; as critic, 260 f.; editorial positions of, 257 f.; education of, 254, 256; estimate of character of, 259 f.; his period of wandering, 256; last days of, 259; marriage of, 257; military experiences of, 256 f.; poetry of, 257, 258 f., 261 f.; portrait of, 255; short stories of, 257, 258, 262 ff.; suggested reading, 397
- Poetry, present-day interest in, 372
- Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*, 356, 359, 361
- Ponteach, or The Savages of America*, 79
- Poor Richard's Almanac*, 33, 36, 38 ff.
- Porter, William Sydney. *See* Henry, O.
- Prairie*, 360
- Prairie, The*, 108
- Prescott, William H., 85, 225 f., 363
- Present Crisis, The*, 218; extract, 218 f.
- Preston, Margaret Junkin, 271, 284
- Prince and the Pauper, The*, 329
- Prince of Parthia, The*, 32, 79
- Prison Ship, The British*, extract, 76
- Professor at the Breakfast Table, The*, 207
- Progress of Dulness, The*, 70
- Prophet Jonah, The*, 75
- Pudd'nhead Wilson*, 329
- Quakers, 13, 30 f., 38, 168, 192
- Ramona*, 369
- Randall, James Ryder, 284
- Randolph, John, 251
- Raven, The*, 258, 261, 262
- Read, Thomas Buchanan, 139
- Reconstruction Period, 318; in literature, 295, 301
- Remington, Frederic, 370
- Renaissance, New England's, 149 ff., 157
- Repplier, Agnes, 142
- Reveries of a Bachelor*, 240
- Revolution, American, 38, 45 ff., 149
- Rhymes to be Traded for Bread*, 360
- Rice, Alice Hegan, 305
- Rice, Cale Young, 289, 305
- Richard Carvel*, 368, 369
- Richmond as a literary center, 247
- Rights of Man, The*, 63
- Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved, The*, 49

- Riley, James Whitecomb, 320, 340 ff.; early poems of, 342; honors accorded to, 342, 344; popularity of, 340 f., 342; portrait of, 343; wanderings of, 341 f.; youth of, 341; suggested reading, 399
- Ripley, George, 154
- Rip Van Winkle, 92, 95, 96
- Rise of Silas Lapham, The*, 244
- Rise of the Dutch Republic, The*, 226
- Robinson, Edwin Arlington, 234 f.
- Roe, Edward Payson, 148
- Rogers, Robert, 79
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 144
- Roughing It*, 327
- Rowson, Susanna, 81
- Russell, Irwin, 286 ff.; portrait of, 287
- Russell's Magazine*, 247, 268, 271
- Rutledge, John, 251
- Ryan, Abram Joseph, 284 ff.; portrait of, 285
- Salem witchcraft, 17, 25, 168
- Sandburg, Carl, 348, 258 ff.
- Sandys, George, 8
- Saxe, John Godfrey, 233
- Scarlet Letter, The*, 174 f., 179
- Science of English Verse, The*, 281
- Scollard, Clinton, 139
- Seabury, Samuel, 52
- Seashore*, 165
- Seawell, Molly Elliot, 295
- Sedgwick, Anne Douglas, 148
- Seeger, Alan, 139 f.
- Selling of Joseph; A Memorial, The*, 17 f.
- Sewall, Judge Samuel, 17 f.; suggested reading, 388
- Shakespeare, William, 8, 33, 121, 170, 224, 234, 310, 318
- Sherman, Frank Dempster, 139
- Short story, 97, 239, 241, 242, 251, 262 f., 301, 303, 308, 311, 312
- Sill, Edward Rowland, 317, 348, 350 f.
- Simms, William Gilmore, 247, 250, 283, 290, 292 f.
- Simple Cobler of Aggawamm, The*, 22 f.
- Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, 29
- Sketch Book, The*, 90, 94, 96, 105, 182
- Slavery. *See* Abolition
- Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, 167, 178, 214
- Smith, C. Alphonso, 306, 312
- Smith, Captain John, 3 ff., 88; suggested reading, 386
- Smith, F. Hopkinson, 250, 291, 294 f.
- Smith, Samuel Francis, 233
- Snow-Bound*, 194, 198, 199
- Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales, The*, 171, 176
- Some Imagist Poets*, 237
- Son of the Middle Border, A*, 366
- Song of Myself*, 121
- Song of the Banjo, The*, 288
- South, the, colonial literature of, 3 ff., 88; general conditions of, 246 f., influence of slavery on, 248; literary centers of, 247 f.; localism of, 250, 294; nineteenth-century literature of, 89, 246-312
- Southern Literary Messenger, The*, 218, 247, 248, 257, 268, 271, 284
- Spanish Student, The*, 188
- Spectator*, 34, 70, 93, 252
- Speech on Liberty*, 50 f.; extract, 50
- Spoon River Anthology*, 356 ff.; extracts, 356, 358
- Spy, The*, 104, 105, 106
- Standish, Captain Miles, 16
- Stanton, Frank Lebby, 289 f.
- Star-Spangled Banner, The*, 282
- Stedman, Edmund Clarence, 140, 230
- Stewart, Charles D., 371
- Stith, William, 9
- Stockton, Frank R., 145, 146
- Stoddard, Richard Henry, 139
- Story of a Bad Boy, The*, 230, 231
- Story of the Other Wise Man, The*, 148
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 239 f.
- Strachey, William, 6, 8; suggested reading, 386
- Stuart, Ruth McEnery, 291, 301

- Summary View of the Rights of America*, A, 56  
 Sumner, Charles, 156  
*Sunnyside*, Irving's home, 98 ff.  
*Sunrise*, 281  
*Surry of Eagle's Nest*, 293  
*Swamp Fox, The*, 283
- Tabb, John Bannister, 289  
*Tales of a Traveler*, 96  
*Tales of a Wayside Inn*, 187  
*Tanglewood Tales*, 176  
 Tarkington, Newton Booth, 371  
 Taylor, Bayard, 116, 140, 230, 325  
 Teasdale, Sara, 352 f.  
*Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America; Or Several Poems, Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, The*, 20; extract, 20  
*Terminus*, 166; extract, 166  
 Thanatopsis, 112, 115, 116, 117  
 Thanet, Octave, 370  
 Thaxter, Celia, 233  
*Their Story Runneth Thus*, 285 f.  
 Theology, Calvinistic, 12, 13, 21, 27, 28, 29, 88, 149, 150, 151; Unitarian, 149 ff., 155  
 Thompson, John Reuben, 248, 284  
 Thompson, Maurice, 272, 351, 370  
 Thorcau, Henry David, 152, 154, 157, 197, 208 ff., 216; death of, 214 f.; early life of, 209 f.; first published volume of, 213; friendship with Emerson, 212; personality of, 211 f.; pioneer nature writer, 208; portrait of, 209; published books of, 214; simple method of life of, 211; *Walden, or Life in the Woods*, 212, 214; Walden Pond, residence of, 212 f.; suggested reading, 397  
*Thoreau's Journals*, 214  
*Three Fates, The*, 147  
*Threnody*, 166  
 Ticknor, Francis Orray, 284  
 Ticknor, George, 225  
*Tiger Lilies*, 277  
 Timrod, Henry, 247, 250, 265 ff., 283, 292; death of, 270; early poems of, 268; education of, 266; effects of the war on, 269 f.; friendship with Hayne, 266, 270; growing fame of, 265, 269; marriage of, 269; portrait of, 267; too harsh criticism of, 265, 266; war poetry of, 268 f.; suggested reading, 398  
*To a Waterfowl*, 111 f., 115, 117  
*Tom Sawyer*, 322, 327 ff.  
 Transcendentalism, 27, 149, 151 ff., 208, 233, 239  
 Trent, Professor William P., 98, 252  
*True Relation of Some Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned since the First Planting of the Colony, A*, 3 f.  
*True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gales, Knight, upon and from the Ilands of the Bermudas*, 6, 8  
 Trumbull, John, 69 ff.; early writings of, 70; *McFingal*, 70 ff.; youth and education, 69; suggested reading, 392  
 Twain, Mark, 141, 317, 319, 320 ff., 342, 344; a creative genius, 320; *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 329; as a lecturer, 326 f., 330; as printer and river pilot, 322 f.; *Gilded Age, The*, 327; his experiences in the Far West, 323 ff.; honors accorded, 330 f.; *Innocents Abroad, The*, 325 f.; journalistic work of, 326; marriage of, 326; origin of pen name of, 324; other important works of, 329 f.; portrait of, 321, 328; *Roughing It*, 327; *Tom Sawyer*, 327 ff.; suggested reading, 399  
*Twice-Told Tales*, 171 f., 260  
*Two Years before the Mast*, 240  
 Tyler, Moses Coit, 8, 9, 48, 53, 60  
 Tyler, Royall, 80
- Uncle Remus*, 298, 300  
*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 239 f., 363, 369  
*Under the Old Elm*, 222  
 Unitarianism, 149 ff., 155

- van Dyke, Henry, 139, 140, 148  
 Very, Jones, 233  
*Village Blacksmith, The*, 184, 190  
 Virginia, University of, 59  
*Vision of Sir Launfal, The*, 219, 220 f.; extract, 221  
*Voluntaries*, extract, 166
- Walden, or Life in the Woods*, 212, 214  
 Wallace, General Lew, 363 f.  
*Walt Whitman, a Study*, 142  
*Wanted*, quoted, 232  
 Ward, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, 241  
 Ward, Nathaniel, 22 f.  
 Ward, William Hayes, 282  
*War Message Address* (Wilson), 144  
 Warner, Charles Dudley, 140, 141, 327  
 Warren, Mercy, 79  
 Washington, George, 38, 47, 59 f., 88, 182, 222, 248, 251; *Farewell Address* of, 59 f.; portrait of, 61  
*Wayside, The*, Hawthorne's home, 177  
 Webster, Daniel, 110, 156, 198, 253  
*Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, A*, 213  
 Wendell, Professor Barrett, 25, 28, 157  
 Wescott, Edward Noyes, 148  
 West, the, character of literature of, 315 ff.; expansion toward, 313 ff.; meaning of term, 312; publishing centers of, 319; nineteenth-century literature of, 89, 312-371  
 Westminster Abbey, Poet's Corner, 190, 191  
 Wharton, Edith, 148  
 White, Stewart Edward, 371  
 White, William Allen, 371  
 Whitman, Walt, 90, 118 ff., 142, 212, 237, 322, 356, 358, 359; early life of, 118; his period of self-development, 120; in the Civil War, 124; in Washington, 124; later development of, 121; later life and death of, 124 f.; *Leaves of Grass*, 121 ff.; literary position of, 118, 126; message and personality of, 125 f.; portrait of, 119; "I hear America singing," quoted, 373 f.; suggested reading, 395  
 Whittier, John Greenleaf, 31, 122, 156, 157, 192 ff., 220; early life of, 194 f.; first published poem of, 195 f.; further education of, 196 f.; his attachment to cause of abolition, 197; poems of, 198 ff.; "Poet Laureate" of New England, 192, 194; poetry of, classified, 198; portrait of, 193; success of, 197 f.; suggested reading, 396  
*Wieland, or The Transformation*, 83 f.  
 Wiggin, Kate Douglas, 148  
 Wigglesworth, Michael, 13, 20 ff., 33; suggested reading, 389  
 Wilde, Richard Henry, 283  
*Wild Honeysuckle, The*, quoted, 77 f.  
*William Wilson*, 256, 265  
 Willis, Nathaniel Parker, 140  
 Wilson, Robert Burns, 289  
 Wilson, Woodrow, 144  
 Winslow, Edward, 14  
 Winter, William, 142  
 Winthrop, Governor John, 15 f.; suggested reading, 387  
 Wirt, William, 50, 252  
 Wister, Owen, 148  
*Wonder-Book, The*, 176  
 Woodberry, George Edward, 234, 319  
 Woodworth, Samuel, 138  
 Woolman, John, 30, 31 f., 38; suggested reading, 389  
 Wordsworth, William, 77, 110, 112, 125 f., 152, 160  
*Wren's Nest, The*, home of Joel Chandler Harris, 298
- Yankee Doodle*, extract, 66  
 Young, Stark, 290



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